

All the World

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All the World

by [PARNEL](#)

Summary

An accident reveals the female Autobots' existence on Cybertron three million years too early, and has dire consequences.

(A G1-ish take on Shockblurr, with Blurr and Wheelie inserted into Elita's team on Cybertron.)

Notes

I based a lot of this off of the G1 episode "The Search for Alpha Trion" except I just inserted Blurr and Wheelie into Elita's team. I will be doing a little continuity soup to fill in gaps and stuff, mostly just cherry picking IDW. Elita/ her team are a side plot, it'll start off a little heavy w/ them but this is mainly going to be Shockwave/Blurr.

Also, I've been reading both the Arabian Nights and Watership Down so they're kind of random inspirations for this as well?? I'll just include quotes that inspired me at the top of each chapter.

As a warning: I like sparklings. I think they're such a cute concept so there will be looooots of baby content.

Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

“All the world will be your enemy, Prince with a Thousand Enemies, and whenever they catch you, they will kill you... Be cunning, full of tricks, and your people will never be destroyed.”

-Watership Down

Energon was scarce these days, and what little remained of the Autobots on Cybertron had to make themselves scarcer.

Elita One trekked carefully through the debris of a less-maintained sector of Iacon. She kept an optic on the skies as she went, wary of being caught by Shockwave's drones or an errant seeker. Behind her, Firestar trudged dutifully, if a bit slower than normal. They needed to find a new stash of energon, fast. Their reserves were running scrapingly low and it was beginning to take a toll on her team and their young charges.

Rubble shifted ahead of them and Elita paused, lifting a servo to signal Firestar to stop as well.

Both Autobots were immediately alert. Audials set on high sensitivity as they waited, blasters held tight in steady servos.

One of Shockwave's drones lumbered into view and rolled, unaware of the femmes, down the street.

Silently, they followed. Tracking for miles as the drone wound around the decrepit city in a way designed to throw less-skilled trackers off its trail until it finally reached its destination.

Elita and Firestar huddled close, hidden behind a decaying wall as the drone pulled in to a nondescript building. They watched, patient, as another drone emerged to scan and evaluate the new drone for any signs of being tampered, as per security protocol that Elita was long familiar with. Shockwave wasn't particularly creative in this regard, and it helped that he held no suspicion that the femmes even existed.

It was their cue.

As the second drone emerged to do its duty it left the entrance to the building partially exposed. An insignificant oversight to a larger mech, but a great advantage to the smaller Autobots. They slipped skillfully inside. Avoiding detection by the drone at the entrance and moving in toward their goal.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of cubes of energon were stockpiled here. If Elita were a weaker bot she would have collapsed with despair and hunger at the sight. Deep down in her spark she was tempted to seize control of the warehouse. To go out, blasters blazing, and gun down the drones and any bot that attempted to take what she had stolen. Her team deserved more; they deserved all this, they deserved not to live weary and hungry every moment of their cycles.

She was not a fool, however.

She knew that her team's continued existence depended upon their secrecy. They didn't have the strength or numbers to defend such an exposed location. Which was why she and Firestar only collected a small amount of the cubes. Fifty at most, if Elita had to guess as they made off with them. Which -in comparison to the thousands in the warehouse- was like picking crumbs from an energon goodie.

Elita and Firestar were creeping warily towards the entrance where the drones were still occupied when the sound of a jet's engine blared outside. Startled, Firestar jerked, and a cube of energon slipped from her grasp.

It clattered to the ground, incriminatingly loud in the silence of the warehouse.

"What was that?" A voice, no doubt the newly-arrived Decepticon jet, filtered in from the entrance.

"Well, don't just stand around! Go in and investigate!"

Elita gave a sharp look to Firestar, stopping her from picking up the cube. It had landed in a natural position beside a pile of cubes. Giving the appearance of it having simply fallen from being stacked incorrectly.

"What do you mean, '*can't investigate until security protocols are completed*'?" The seeker outside cawed, his voice carrying through the entrance. "Worthless drones!" He spat, and his pede steps drew closer.

They hid behind another large energon cube pile just as the doors were fully wrenched open. A tall mech entered, unfortunately bland in appearance for a seeker; he was a generic shade of Decepticon purple with scowling face plates to match.

Elita held as still as possible; Firestar pressed close to her side.

The Decepticon stalked about the front of the warehouse. He paused when he found the fallen cube- peering at it for a long, uncomfortable moment. He looked up at the pile and seemed to buy the idea that it must have fallen.

Crouching down, the seeker plucked the cube up with an annoyed scoff and tucked it into his own subspace.

Satisfied with the evidence the seeker left as swiftly as he had come, leaving the entrance just *slightly* open and hurling useless insults at the drones before taking off.

They waited a bit longer, just to be sure that the seeker had truly left, then snuck back out of the building and past the busy drones.

Ever cautious, Elita made Firestar trek a couple of miles in root-mode with her before she let her transform. She loaded the cubes they had stolen onto Firestar's truck alt-mode, then transformed herself.

They fled quickly, unaware of red optics watching them from above.

Elita's vents sighed with relief when they arrived at their base. She transformed and began unloading the energon from Firestar's alt-mode, sending it down the hatch to their underground home.

"Elita-" Firestar transformed once Elita had finished, following her leader meekly down the base's entrance. Her expression was dejected and she avoided her leader's optics. "Elita, I'm sorry. I messed up back there and-"

Her words were cut off when Elita placed a comforting servo on her shoulder.

"It was an accident, Firestar. No need to apologize." Elita understood all too well that accidents happened despite planning and caution, it was unavoidable. "We made it out okay, we will just need to be more vigilant in the future."

"All things considered," Elita added, when Firestar still seemed upset. "I think we made it out pretty good." She hefted a couple cubes and gave the red femme a small smile.

Firestar's lips quirked up faintly. She was still shaken, unused to failure. Their existence had almost been revealed due to her clumsiness. But at least it had not gone as badly as it could have. At least they would not go hungry for a few more cycles.

Elita, glad that Firestar's mood was slightly lifted, gestured for her to begin gathering up the cubes to share with the others.

As the Autobot leader approached the open doorway to the base's main room she paused. Shrouded in a bit of shadow and as-of-yet unnoticed, Elita One observed her team.

It was interesting to her to see how they acted without her authoritative presence about.

Lancer and Greenlight, she noted, were huddled by a console appearing to be working on monitoring and tracking Decepticon activity. Their frames were very close. Curled intimately towards one another as they spoke. Greenlight tilted her helm, glancing up at Lancer with a certain gleam in her optics. Elita huffed silently, amused and concerned at once. She would need to remind them of Autobot regulations regarding fraternization at some point.

Maybe.

She was loathe to snuff out any sort of happiness her team could find on their enemy-riddled and barren home world.

Giggling caught her audials and her attention shifted, drawn to a corner of the room. A small smile slid across her face plates.

The youngest members of her team were entertaining their charge. Moonracer and Blurr played with an orange youngling on the ground. Some sort of game of chase or catch; the two racers waited until the mechling toddled towards them before sprinting off just as he came close enough to catch them. Their antics drew peals of laughter from the mechling. It was joltingly pleasant to hear, especially considering their days were usually filled with either silence or the sounds of fighting.

Elita considered the youngling for a moment. Wheelie, his designation was. His creators had been foolish to bring a new spark into the world during a war. Especially a frame-born one. While forged and cold-constructed Cybertronians could be brought online as adults -having the advantage of their sparks being created by something highly powerful- frame-born sparklings could not. The energy created during a spark merge between two bots was not comparable to the sheer power of the Allspark. Frame-born bots were rare and considered somewhat taboo to create; they were fragile, and had to develop their spark and frame's strength over time. They had to grow. And Cybertronians, with their long lives, aged slowly.

They were fools, and now they were offline. Elita felt the weight of responsibility for their creation's safety heavily on her shoulders.

In the corner of the room, Blurr snuck behind Wheelie while the youngling was distracted by Moonracer. In a flash he snatched the youngling and twirled him around wildly. Wheelie squealed and Moonracer cheered them on until Blurr stopped and held the sparkling up to bump their forehelms together. Small servos rose to grab and pat at Blurr's cheeks.

"How was that I bet it was super fun super-duper amazingly fun huh Wheeli-" Blurr's fast-paced teasing was cut off when Wheelie abruptly purged on his face plates.

"Hah!" Chromia barked out a short laugh from where she was sitting at a table writing reports.

Blurr shot her a scathing look. It was not all that intimidating with regurgitated energon dripping from his nasal ridge.

"I'll get it!" Moonracer rushed over with a cleaning rag and started vigorously rubbing his face plates.

"Moonracer! Stop-stop this is from the dirty pile you're getting oil all in my optics ow-ow-ow-!" Blurr screeched. Wheelie looked unconcerned in his arms. The mechling's orange helm lolled sleepily to the side and nestled itself into the crook of Blurr's neck while he fussed at Moonracer.

Elita frowned. It was not directed not at her teammates. The events of this cycle's energon run resurfaced in her processor. Bits of code prodded at her, analyzing the Decepticon's actions again and again. It worried her. She had been truthful in that she did not blame Firestar in any way, but their close call with the Decepticon seeker left her unsettled. Something about the easy way the seeker had left made her cautious.

A servo hesitantly pressed against Elita's arm and drew her attention away from the scene. She turned around to find Firestar standing behind her, one arm occupied with holding energon cubes. She quirked an optical ridge at her curiously. Elita only shifted to the side in silent reply, letting Firestar glimpse the antics of their youngest teammates.

"When are you going to learn not to spin him around like that, Blurr? This is what, the tenth time he's purged his tank on you?" Firestar called out as she and Elita entered the room. Their entrance had their teammates scrambling up in surprise and excitement.

"You're back!"

"How did it go?"

"Can we refuel now? I'm starving-" The torrent of questions was silenced when Chromia intervened, stepping out in front of the others.

"Back off for a moment, let them speak!" She huffed, then turned her own expectant optics on Elita One and Firestar.

Elita smiled, trying to shake off her earlier unease and settle back into her role as their commanding officer, and motioned towards Firestar's full servos. "As you all can see, our mission was a success."

"You are all free to refuel, but take only what you need. This supply will have to last us awhile." Elita paused; her expression became pensive. "We had a complication occur during our mission, one of Shockwave's seekers nearly discovered us. Because of this, I believe we should go into a lockdown for a few quartexes –perhaps three- at least until we need to do another energon run."

The others murmured, EM fields flaring with unease.

"We can't stay inside for more than two quartexes!" Moonracer cried, the most vocal of the group.

Of course, the speedsters would take to confinement badly. The Autobots kept a low profile, but Elita normally allowed smaller low-risk missions to be done in order to give everyone a chance to stretch their legs outside the base. The speedsters in particular needed that time and freedom. Even now Blurr was shifting anxiously on his pedes at the mere idea of being trapped inside.

Greenlight and Lancer, despite not needing the same sort of exercise that came with being a racer, were also visibly apprehensive at the idea of a mandatory lockdown. Only Firestar and Chromia seemed willing enough to follow Elita's plan.

"Elita, I agree with you, but at the same time- is this course of action too extreme? We have no proof that the seeker or one of the drones noticed our presence." Firestar asked, her lips twisting into a frown.

Chromia looked thoughtful.

“Could be helpful. Shockwave has been increasing his drone activity lately.” The blue femme drawled. Moonracer visibly twitched.

“Hmm, perhaps Firestar is right. I do not wish to be excessively cautious, nor do I mean to hurt either of you; Moonracer, Blurr.” Elita rumbled, looking to the youngest of them. There was no proof that the seeker had at all been suspicious, but still... something in Elita’s coding pricked with unease. Her instincts told her that this was the correct action even if her processor was uncertain.

“I will consult with Alpha Trion on this matter. He will help us decide what is best.” She decided.

This answer mollified her teammates a bit. They all trusted in the wisdom and council of Alpha Trion.

“Go refuel, all of you. I will speak with him at once.” Elita commanded. She only lingered in the main room long enough to ensure they all were following her order. Her solitary pedesteps echoed as she went to her private communication console. The sound was particularly ominous to her audials.

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“Shockwave. Acknowledge.”

Alone in his laboratory, Shockwave rose and went to answer the call.

“Report.”

“Two female Autobots were spotted escaping one of our storage facilities with several cubes of energon. I attempted to follow them, but lost them before I could discover their base of operations.”

“What?” Shockwave’s single optic flashed. “Female Autobots?”

“Yes, sir.” The seeker replied. His tone was slightly snappy, but Shockwave did not notice.

‘How interesting.’ The scientist mused. Interesting, but ultimately worthless information. They would be offline soon. He turned back to the issue at servo.

“Send me the coordinates of their last known position at once, and redirect your trine to begin surveillance on the entire area within 50 klicks of their last sighted location. I want them captured -or offlined- quickly.” Shockwave commanded.

“Should we move the energon to a different location, sir?” The seeker enquired, and Shockwave’s finials twitched for a moment as he considered the question.

“No. Move half of our supply to an uncompromised facility but leave the rest as bait. The Autobots will need to steal again, lest they wish to starve.”

Shockwave only listened long enough to hear a garbled “Yes, sir.” before he cut the transmission. His servo lingered above the console for a moment. He snatched it back as if it had been burned.

He had been reaching to place a call to Megatron.

As per usual protocol he would normally report everything to his leader. But it was just Shockwave, alone, now. Of course, he had his seeker trine, his drones, and apparently- an Autobot infestation. But there were no more Decepticons to be reached. They were gone; unresponsive and missing from any and every communication or scan he had attempted over the past one million kilocycles.

Nonetheless, Shockwave was certain this would not always be so. Megatron will return; of that he was confident. And when Megatron returns perhaps Cybertron will *not* be as he left it.

Perhaps, when Megatron returns, he will find a Cybertron purged clean of all Autobot resistance by Shockwave’s firm servo.

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“-In order to avoid our base’s location becoming compromised, Alpha Trion has approved the idea of going on temporary lockdown. It would only be beneficial to our continued secrecy- as there has been an increase in Shockwave’s drone activity in our sector recently. The lockdown is effective immediately and will be lifted as soon as drone activity decreases, or after our next energon run.”

Moonracer groaned dejectedly and hoisted Wheelie into a more comfortable position on her hip plating. Blurr was more anxious- he stepped forward and looked up at Elita.

“Elita One ma’am not that I question your orders or your judgement or Alpha Trion’s but what are Moonracer and I going to do I mean we already watch Wheelie but as a courier and a scout most of our duties require us to leave the base and if we can’t leave the base-”

“-*Blurr.*” Elita soothed, placing a servo on his shoulder pauldron. “I also discussed this with Alpha Trion. He has sent a few important data files in need of organizing that will hopefully occupy your courier programming, not to mention there are many physically-taxing tasks that need to be done inside our base. I’m sure we can find a way to keep you and Moonracer occupied.”

Blurr nodded rapidly, though his processor revolted at the idea of being stuck inside doing *datawork* and lifting crates. From the way Moonracer slouched at his side he could tell she felt the same way.

He would do it all the same- and he wouldn’t complain. Much. He didn’t want their base to be discovered and understood Elita was just trying her best to keep them all safe. Outwardly she seemed calm and assured as ever, but Blurr was obsessive about details and could not

help but notice the way her plating seemed clamped down tighter to her protoform than usual and her servos clenched occasionally when she stood still thinking for too long. Blurr wouldn't say she seemed scared. No. Elita One was never fearful or needlessly paranoid. But she was rattled by something. And if *Elita One* was cautious, then it was serious.

The rest of the conversation passed over Blurr's helm in a rush. Greenlight had had a few questions for Elita but he was too focused on his own speeding thoughts to truly pay attention. Besides him, Moonracer was mopey and quiet, half-sparkedly playing with Wheelie's servos in order to keep him occupied as the team meeting wore on.

As soon as Elita dismissed them, sending them all to either recharge or to their normal work-shifts, Blurr sidled up to Moonracer and bumped into her comfortably. If he had been brought online with a spark twin, he had no doubt it would have been Moonracer. Their frames and personalities were so alike. Though, Moonracer was normally the more cheerful one of out of either of them.

"This is a load of slag." Moonracer grumbled, and Blurr startled. He flung his servos over Wheelie's audials and glared at the green femme.

"Don't do that you know not to swear around the sparkling Moonracer he hasn't fully developed his speech programs yet do you want his first words to be something bad you-know-I-read-that-sparklings-"

Moonracer cracked a smile and batted his servos away from a disgruntled Wheelie. "-Calm down Blurr! He's got a few more kilocycles to go before he'll get to a talking stage. Isn't that right?" The last part was cooed down to the sparkling in her arms.

Wheelie let out a soft string of whistles and beeps that sounded lyrical and almost mocking. Blurr's vents chuffed loudly, still offended on Wheelie's behalf.

The two racers lingered next to one another for a moment in silence, watching the youngling make faces at them before Blurr softened. His struts relaxing as he met Moonracer's optics seriously.

"I know this isn't the best thing to happen but it could get serious and I don't want it to get serious even if we have to stay cooped up inside for three quartexes- but-you-have-Wheelie-and-I and we can all keep each other occupied when we run out of work to do so we'll be fine I'm sure of it-" Blurr had to cut himself off before he rambled any further. He was nervous, if he was being honest. Racer models, more specifically the ones built to fulfill certain specialized tasks such as couriers or scouts, required regular physical and mental exercise to disperse any excess charge built up in their frames. They were built for speed and constant movement and when deprived of that outlet, the buildup of electrical charge put out by their sparks could prove fatal. For Blurr this went doubly, maybe even triply, because of how fast he was. And for... other reasons.

That was a worst-case scenario, of course. There were many ways to disperse the buildup, though few were as enjoyable and fulfilling as being able to perform their frames' function.

Moonracer saw through him immediately.

“Blurr,” She sighed, finally calming enough to expand her EM field and let it overlap comfortingly with his. “You’re right, as always. We’ll be fine.” Moonracer was never one to stay angry, or upset. Her moods always bounced back to her usual cheerful at some point.

Lancer chose that very moment to walk past them and Moonracer -looking for a way to turn their conversation lighter- used her appearance as a distraction. Smiling impishly at Blurr, she raised her voice enough to be overheard. “I’m just bummed we’re going to be forced to watch Lancer swoon over Greenlight for three quartexes.”

Lancer froze in her tracks. Her huge purple and orange shoulder pauldrons rose defensively and her face plates practically glowed with the force of her blush. Blurr’s engine squealed, amused at the sight.

“Watch it, Moony, or else.” The large femme warned, glowering down at them with burning cheeks. “Just remember; I don’t *have* to help with sparkling-sitting.”

The two racers’ grins dropped faster than light and Moonracer turned wide, distressed optics up at her.

“I was just joking Lancer!” She cried, but her whines landed on uncaring audials as Lancer turned away with a smug smile.

“Maybe I’ll leave Wheelie with you two more often. It’ll give me more time to- what did you say? *Swoon* over Greenlight.” Lancer called back over her shoulder. Moonracer practically threw Wheelie at Blurr.

“Wait a minute you can’t do that Lancer we-” Blurr watched as the green femme ran after Lancer, leaving him alone with Wheelie.

He looked down at the mechling in his arms.

“That was ridiculous mh-huh just-silly-absurd-downright-dumb don’t you think?” He babbled whatever came to his processor to entertain the sparkling. Any other time it would have Wheelie cooing and grabbing at Blurr’s intake with his tiny servos. The youngling seemed to realize that Blurr’s speech pattern was different, and was endlessly amused whenever he spoke.

Right now, it seemed that Wheelie was in no mood for him. His face plates scrunched up, nasal ridge creasing, and he let out the worst wail Blurr had ever heard.

He twitched at the sound but he was long used to Wheelie’s behavior and knew what this certain wail meant.

“Alright-alright-alright I’ll get you some fuel I don’t get how you’re still hungry but if that’s really what you want-” He straightened and clasped Wheelie firmly to his chassis before sprinting off.

He made it to their tiny cantina in less than a nano-cycle. His sudden appearance startled Firestar from where she was taking inventory of their energon rations, causing her to drop a cube. In a flash he snatched it -with the servo not holding Wheelie of course- before it could hit the ground.

Firestar placed a servo on her chassis and vented as he handed back the cube. “Blurr! At least stomp a little when you come up like that.”

“Sorry Firestar I don’t mean to I-really-don’t it’s just I forget to be louder every time and my pedes are naturally made to reduce impact and sound and so I don’t mean to startle you-” Firestar waved him off with a huff.

“Okay Blurr, whatever you say.” Actually, Firestar hadn’t caught a word of what he’d said, but she knew it was probably an excuse of some kind from his tone. “What brings you and the sparklet down here anyway?”

Wheelie chose that moment to screech his displeasure to them. Loudly. Blurr tapped a pede impatiently. “He’s hungry. Again.”

Firestar winced, both in sympathy and in pain from the loud noises Wheelie emitted. She turned to her neat pile of cubes and fished a smaller one out and handed it off to him. Then she went back to the data pad she had in front of her and marked off something from her records.

Blurr blurted out a thank you as he rushed to a bench near the red femme and promptly plopped Wheelie into his lap. The youngling’s digestive tank could handle un-filtered energon at this age but he still lacked the coordination to drink from a cube. Because of this, both Moonracer and Blurr had taken to carrying around a set of small spoons and sparkling-friendly bottles in their subspaces to feed Wheelie with whenever he grew hungry and demanded to be fed.

Carefully, he used a spoon to scoop liquid energon from the cube and feed the fussy sparkling. It took a few tries as Wheelie started being stubborn and refused to open his intake. Blurr tried making shuttle-noises, then race car noises, cooing, and wagging the spoon around enticingly. No dice. Wheelie simply puffed his cheeks and smacked the spoon away with his tiny fists.

Rolling his optics upward for a moment in exasperation, Blurr went back to his subspace and brought out a bottle.

Filling it with energon, he capped it with a special nozzle-cap and held it to Wheelie’s intake.

He latched onto the bottle eagerly and Blurr slumped a bit in relief.

As Wheelie drank, Blurr looked back to Firestar. She had been uncomfortably silent and was now staring blankly at a cube in her servo. When she didn’t move after a whole breem Blurr couldn’t help but ask:

“Are you okay? You don’t look okay you’re acting really weird and it’s making me feel weird because you don’t seem okay-”

Firestar blinked slowly at him before her optics returned to the cube. A frown creased across her lips. “I dropped one of these earlier this cycle, too. During the energon run.”

When Blurr remained silent, only the sound of his tapping pedes and Wheelie’s slurping lingering in the air, she continued. “It’s why we almost got caught. And you know, I just find it so absurd that we go to all these lengths for these little cubes. That they can cause so much fighting.”

She let out a bitter laugh, “You should have seen Shockwave’s supply, Blurr. It was... it was immense. Excessive, even. Just for one mech.” Her vents sighed hollowly. “I’m sorry. I really am, it’s my fault we’re in this mess in the first place.”

“Don’t apologize it’s not your fault if anything it’s Shockwave’s fault for being-greedy-and-cruel he’s the one who’s put all of us in this position in the first place-him-and-Megatron-and-the-rest-of-the-Decepticons. ”

Firestar gave him a weak yet genuine smile. “Thanks, Blurr.”

Blurr only smiled back in response, knowing that if he spoke, he might ruin the moment. His audials twitched as he heard a gurgle from his lap and he looked down to see that Wheelie had tried to drink too fast and had spit up some energon. With a sigh, Blurr took away the bottle and swiped a thumb across the soft-squishy protoform of Wheelie’s cheeks, wiping away the energon there. He could do nothing for the spilled energon on Wheelie’s chassis. The mechling would just need a solvent bath before recharge.

Sated and sleepy and cute once more, Wheelie blinked tired optics at Blurr as the blue mech raised him from his lap and held him to his shoulder. He was terrible at this part.

Acutely aware of Firestar’s optics on him, Blurr used all of his control to gently and slowly pat Wheelie’s back plates. It took a bit, but his firm pats drew a weak burp out of the sparkling and settled his tiny digestive tank.

Blurr held the mechling up to blink at him in wonder. Maybe he was getting better at this sparkling-sitting thing?

“You’re good with him.” Firestar commented, sounding surprised. Blurr twitched.

“Well I wouldn’t say *good*- usually I pat him too fast or too hard since I just can’t help it and he ends up purging everything everywhere but I’m getting better at it maybe-kind-of-sort of I just know that I’m trying very hard to get better at it.”

Firestar looked unconvinced and rested her yellow chin on her servo as she stared at him. “Still. I can’t imagine trying to care for a sparkling.” Her nasal ridge scrunched, “They’re so messy, and loud, and ugly. I could never. You make it look easy, though. I can see why Elita made you and Moonracer his caretakers. I certainly wouldn’t be able to handle it.”

Blurr shrugged quickly and looked away, strangely embarrassed. “It is pretty hard but I have Moonracer and Lancer helping me out so the only really hard part is when he’s recharging because then I have nothing to do and at least when he’s awake I can clean him or feed him or play with him but when he’s recharging its boring and slow and I’d much rather be out running and working but it’s not too much of a hassle since-” Blurr forced himself to pause, cradling Wheelie close to his chassis. “I think he’s cute.”

And he really did (he was also kind of offended Firestar thought he was ugly- doesn’t she know he can’t help it he’s not even two vorns old yet and it’s not like they can do cosmetic upgrades for a sparkling anyway-). Wheelie was a cute little distraction from the war and stress around them. It gave him something to focus on when everything else felt like it was on the verge of crumbling.

Firestar hummed and opticked Wheelie dubiously. “I guess we’ll have to agree to disagree on that.” Blurr rolled his optics and shifted back and forth on the bench.

“He’ll grow into-his-frame.” He insisted. Wheelie had the most adorable helm with a protruding bill above his optics and miniature wheels built into his knee-joints that hinted at a possible racer alt mode. But his plating was an unfortunate shade of orange, Blurr had to admit.

Firestar shrugged, bemused, and turned back to her inventory records. She frowned at the numbers. “If he even gets to grow up at all.” She grumbled, tacking on the comment thoughtlessly. Both bots froze.

“Scrap. I didn’t mean that to sound so-”

“It’s-okay-I-get-it--”

They both spoke at once and cut each other off. They looked away from one another awkwardly.

“I get it.” Blurr repeated, taking care to enunciate the words. He took a deep vent and continued, his next question spilling out in his normal rush. “Do you think they’re online-?”

And that was the question, wasn’t it? He just couldn’t hold his glossa any longer. He had to ask it. The proverbial mecha-elephant hovering over every conversation and present in every room. *Do you think they’re okay? Do you think they’ll come back?*

One million kilocycles wasn’t very long for a Cybertronian, but for the Ark and its passengers to be missing that long?

“I... It doesn’t matter what I think.” Firestar started, “I know that they aren’t here. I know that we are alone on this planet, surrounded by enemies. That our energon is running out. I know that... while we can’t give up hope, we also can’t count on them coming back.”

Blurr looked down, spark sinking like lead as he agreed with every word.

“But there’s one thing I know for certain-” Firestar turned towards him fully, her expression grim and optics blazing strongly enough to match her designation.

“I know we can’t go on like this.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

"Moonracer huffed and rolled her optics. 'Well? Don't take all cycle! Put it on and let's blow this energon-stand.'"

Chapter Notes

if u havent read Windblade vol. 2 issue 4 and 5 ommggg please do, Blurr and Moonracer look so cute on Velocitron

enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"My heart has joined the Thousand, for my friend stopped running today."

-Watership Down

[Two deca-cycles into Lockdown.]

Blurr was about to lose his processor.

"It's supposed to be placed vertically. Did you hear me? You're doing it wrong."

"I am not doing it wrong! I'm not doing anything wrong. *You're* the one who's got it wrong."

"I have the instructions, Moonracer. How-

"Shut up, both of you! I can't see what I'm doing."

"How is me talking making you unable to see? That doesn't make any sense."

Lancer pried her helm out from under the console and glared at the light green femme. Moonracer's intake snapped shut with a loud *clack*. Beside her, Greenlight smirked and haughtily waved her datapad with the console blueprints in front of Moonracer's face.

With a huff, Lancer sat back onto her heels and looked towards Blurr, who was pacing a hole into the ground with Wheelie sitting on his shoulders. The mechling was gnawing harmlessly on the back of Blurr's helm with his denta-less gums. It was not distracting enough to be annoying yet. Blurr was insanely bored.

"Blurr, can't you switch spots with Moonracer? She's giving me a processor ache."
Moonracer let out an offended gasp.

He jumped in surprise at the question. Lancer, Moonracer, and Greenlight were doing maintenance repairs on one of the main consoles, as they had run out of ideas on what else to do outside of everyday duties. There was only so much Decepticon-monitoring and crate-organizing they could do before the work ran out.

They were all -to put it quickly- *bored*.

"I would Lancer I would I really-really would but I'm the worst at helping with repairs just ask Chromia- she yells at me every time I try to help out I guess I can't hold a flashlight still or something-"

"That's okay. It was worth a shot." Lancer sighed and gazed back at the console with tired optics.

Greenlight perked up. She looked like she'd just had an idea. Blurr did not want to see the idea.

She leaned down towards where Lancer sat glum on the floor, engine purring as she smiled suggestively. "I think this could be a job for just two bots, actually... Maybe we could get more work done without any *distractions*."

Moonracer gagged obnoxiously. "You two are gross."

Lancer looked like she was going to offline. From embarrassment or excitement, Blurr couldn't tell.

"This doesn't concern you." Greenlight sniffed, opticking Moonracer like she was a bothersome sparklet. "Why don't you and Blurr *run*-" She paused to snort at her own joke, "-along and find something to do. Oh! I know, why don't you two clean out storage room 5A? Primus knows it needs to be cleaned."

"No way! That room is-" Moonracer began to protest but cut herself off. Her vocalizer crackled with static as Greenlight ignored her and started trailing a green servo across Lancer's arm.

"Okay-okay-okay let's go Moonracer I don't mind cleaning-" Blurr panicked and covered Wheelie's optics with one servo. Moonracer looped her arm around his unoccupied one and

together they fled the scene.

Running through their underground base, even small as it was, felt exhilarating. Especially with Moonracer by his side and Wheelie squealing on his shoulders.

They leapt over cracks in the floor, dodged empty storage boxes, zig-zagged around an aggravated Chromia, and looped around the cantina twice just for fun. Moonracer wasn't as fast as him and she had to grip onto his arm tightly, her pede steps growing longer and longer while she basically dangled from him with a huge grin on her faceplates. He slowed just enough for her to touch down and run on her own as they approached the storage room.

Not wanting to stop abruptly like Moonracer did beside him, Blurr did two last cool-down loops around the storage room. His pedes nimbly weaved around debris and aged supplies while he surveyed everything. It was a mess! Absolutely disgusting and full of useless junk. Even if they cleaned it there would be no point as everything here was obviously outdated garbage.

He couldn't even use that as an excuse *not* to clean the room, though, because he was so eager to have something to do.

He darted playfully around Moonracer a couple times, amused by her attempts to catch him, and then stopped to place Wheelie onto a clear patch of floor. The sparkling wobbled a bit on his servos and knee-joints. Probably dizzy from the fast ride.

Wheelie let out a long warble, vocalizer straining, before tumping back onto his aft.

Definitely dizzy.

Moonracer canted her helm to the side.

"Hmm he looks kinda uncomfortable, maybe we should get a bla-" Blurr zipped off before she could finish the thought. He remembered seeing a mesh blanket in the back of the storage room and he quickly retrieved it and spread it out on the ground. Moonracer rolled Wheelie onto the blanket and they both watched as he inspected it by patting his tiny servos around. Satisfied with whatever his barely-formed processor had found, the youngling trilled happily and faceplanted into the metal mesh.

Moonracer turned with a grin and cracked her servo-joints. "Bet ya' ten shanix I can clean faster than you."

"Twenty- I'll have half the room empty before mid-cycle." Blurr smirked.

"Deal."

The rest of the cycle whirled by, and by evening they had cleared the entire storage room and scrubbed it clean twice over.

Moonracer groaned, stretched her back struts, and plopped down onto the mesh blanket beside Wheelie. The mechling stirred in his recharge but did not wake.

“Alright...” she sighed and held out a servo expectantly, fingers wagging. “Pay up.”

“What?” Blurr squawked, “You pay up I won that bet did you see I had more than half the room cleared while you were sitting on your aft doing *what* I-don’t-know but it wasn’t cleaning that’s for sure-*Ow-!*” A small piece of rubble smacked into the left side Blurr’s helm and cut him off. Moonracer used the distraction to snatch his servo and drag him down onto the blanket.

“When did you even throw that and how was it so fast and how did it come from the opposite direction- and don’t-think-you-can-distract-me!” Blurr rubbed his helm and watched the femme suspiciously.

“That’s your problem, Blurr.” Moonracer sang, poking him. “You think fast, but not smart. There is a difference.”

“Sure-sure-sure wise advice from the best sharpshooter in the galaxy huh I guess you know everything there is to know about everything except how to clean-” Moonracer shoved him, her smile playful.

“Shut up. And it’s ‘Best Sharpshooter in the *Universe*’. Get it right at least.”

“Of-course.” he snipped, rolling his optics as he cuddled closer to Wheelie’s warm frame. “I’m not even tired we should get up we still have to move those old wire replacements over to storage room 4A and I’m not even slightly worn out but I wouldn’t expect you to know what it’s like since you’re so slow-”

He was in recharge in less than an astro-second.

Moonracer smiled fondly at his lax frame for a moment, before she curled up on the other side of Wheelie to take a nap as well.

—

[Two Quartexes into Lockdown.]

Data streamed through his processor effortlessly. Thousands of files on Autobot battle strategies, historical records, old communication logs, secret base locations, artefacts, and weapons blueprints were processed, sorted, and catalogued. The port on his wrist twinged where it connected to the console as the sheer volume of information caused his circuits to heat up.

He couldn’t stop, though.

Blurr was no data clerk, but as a data courier he needed the ability to efficiently organize and store information. It was satisfying in a similar way to running -not as good, but definitely close- to stretch his systems like this. He wasn't the best option for this job, he had to admit. His processor was suited to the work, but courier programming required that all files he handled were duplicated and the copies downloaded to one of his storage banks- Blurr had two; a special attribute of courier models, most Cybertronians typically had only one. It was great for when he needed to retrieve or deliver un-altered data but it slowed him down when he was just meant to be organizing.

His processor flicked through files rapidly, faster than any normal mech, curiously poking around at everything. Alpha Trion certainly had a collection.

A word caught his attention and he latched onto it, following the trail back to a section of information dedicated to Cybertronian myths. Or history, depending on how religious a bot you were. The folders held stories chronicling the creation of Cybertron and the trials and labor of Primus as he created their species:

[-A space existed there for him, as of yet unfilled, and he settled his massive, ancient frame into it and allowed himself to change.

Arms curled in and plating flared out, until he was transformed into a living planet. A machine with a mind at the center of a world: he started the second part of his plan. Forges within his frame lit up as he crafted the first of his creations; creatures of metal and skin, with many faces and a cruel intellect-]

Somewhat interesting stuff. If you were a *bazillion* stellar-cycles old. But still, he was desperate for anything new.

Blurr let a part of his processor entertain itself with it while the rest worked.

For joors he went on like this. He didn't stop until every file was downloaded and sorted and micromanaged so that every detail was as neat as he could make it. It wasn't until a warning popped up on his HUD that he was jerked out of his trance and back into his frame. For a moment he scowled at the interruption -he still needed to erase the useless duplicate files clogging his second storage bank- before he took in his frame's condition.

Blurr noted his cooling fans were roaring in the silence of the empty console room.

He dismissed the warnings on his HUD, feeling how hot his frame had become. His pedes twitched and tapped restlessly- he had sated his coding but neglected his frame for a whole cycle. Excess charge sparked at his joints and licked through his transformation seams. His chassis ached.

He shifted anxiously in his seat. Lubricant trickled out from a seam in his valve panel.

Blurr was out of the console room and sprinting through the halls of the base before he could think.

“Hey Blurr, could you-”

“Sorry can’t talk right now I need to go and do something yes-something-important so I can’t stop I need to go right now-” He didn’t even know who he had spoken to and he didn’t really care at the moment. He was only relieved once he made it to his habsuite and remembered that Lancer and Moonracer were on sparkling-sitting duty for five more joors.

He locked the door behind himself and practically flew onto the berth. One servo rose to stroke the sensitive crest on his helm while the other delved between his thighs, his panel clicking back and two fingers plunging into his swollen valve. Lubricant dripped onto his thigh paneling and sparks crackled around his servo as he writhed in place.

Self-servicing was another way to disperse excess charge. Usually, he wouldn’t reach this overcharged state so fast, but he had stupidly sat in one place for a *whole* cycle.

Squirming, he rubbed his external node, sending flares of pleasure up his back struts before he pressed three fingers impatiently back into his valve. The stretch and slick friction had his hips rolling upwards for more, pressing himself onto his own digits. Overwhelmed, he overloaded with cry, his helm tossed back so that his crest rubbed against the berth and added to the stimulation.

He was barely through the first overload before he was back at it again, fingers trailing through the mess on his thighs and reentering his valve. Blurr was *fast*; of course that translated to the berth as well. He wrung at least four more overloads from his burning frame, joors passing until the excess charge finally, finally dispersed, leaving him strutless and dazed on the berth. He could have lied there for another cycle- well probably not another cycle probably more like a breem but that was still a long time for him- and maybe get a moment to defrag and clean up his second data bank, if not for-

“Open up!” Pounding on his door. “Come take care of this spawn of Unicron before I lose my processor! He ate a control button and I can’t get it out of his intake.”

Blurr sighed. He’d delete the duplicate files some other time.

—

[Two Quartexes and one Deca-cycle into Lockdown.]

“Get her Elita!”

Moonracer dodged a punch.

“Yeah, go for the helm!”

A light green leg swung out and clipped Elita One on one of her sensory horns. The rest of the Autobots booed.

Elita quickly retreated, falling back into a defensive position and circling Moonracer. The green bot pouted.

“How come no one’s cheering for *me*.” She whined as she narrowly avoided another attack from the femme across from her on the training mat.

“Maybe we would if you weren’t so annoying.” Chromia yawned and kicked her pedes up onto Blurr’s lap to stop his bouncing legs. Blurr shot her a withering look. She smirked and purposefully flicked some dirt onto his blue finish. He retaliated by placing Wheelie onto her lap.

Chromia looked disgusted. She held the youngling out and away from her frame as if he were a living puke-bomb. Which to be fair, he kind of was. Blurr’s frame vibrated smugly while he updated the score board on his HUD:

Blurr: 568 - Chromia: 557

“I am not annoying!” Moonracer cried, spinning around Elita.

Firestar mumbled out a sarcastic “*Suuure.*”

“Maybe you should focus on winning the fight.” Lancer interjected nervously from behind Blurr. She always got way too invested when she watched sparring matches. Greenlight was reading a datapad at Lancer’s side; a disinterested air about her.

“I am winning-!” Elita finally caught Moonracer and hauled her over one shoulder, flipping her around in the air before slamming her face down onto the training mat.

“Never mind.” The mat muffled her words.

“You need to work on your focus, Moonracer.” Elita rumbled as she helped her stand. Moonracer shuffled on her pedes but listened with serious face plates while Elita gave her a few more critiques. Once their leader finished, she dismissed the younger femme with an encouraging pat on her shoulder pauldron and turned to face the group of Autobots assembled in the training room.

“Good job, everyone. That concludes training for this cycle. You’re all dismissed.”

They all let out a collective sigh of relief and moved towards the door.

“Except you, Blurr. Would you mind speaking with me for a moment?”

Greenlight snickered. “Is someone in trouble?” She teased; voice low to avoid detection by Elita. Moonracer somehow managed to giggle and give him a sympathetic look at the same time.

Blurr merely waved Wheelie threateningly in Greenlight’s direction and she scrambled out the door, deterred by the possibility of sparkling-sitting. She smirked at him from behind Lancer and Moonracer’s backs as the doors slid shut.

Alone with his leader in the quiet training room, Blurr busied himself with rearranging Wheelie against his chassis. The bitlet settled his helm against the smooth glass of the courier's windshield, one stubby servo curled sticky fingers into the seams of Blurr's armor (gross-gross-gross he would have to clean that later he hated when Wheelie did that) while the other clutched a makeshift predacon-shaped mesh doll. It was his only toy- Moonracer had made it.

Once the youngling was situated, Blurr turned expectant optics up at his leader.

Elita smiled softly and reached out to gently trail a finger down Wheelie's protoform cheek. "I apologize if my request to speak with you sounded as if I meant to reprimand you. It wasn't my intention."

Blurr nodded rapidly, silently wondering what she did want to talk about.

Elita retreated, physically moving back to give him space while her EM field did the opposite. It reached out towards him radiating support and... hesitance?

"As you know, we will be leaving for our next energon run in a few cycles." Elita started. Blurr shuffled anxiously. "I have decided to extend the lockdown a bit further, for another few quartexes. We will still do the run- but after that we will return to lockdown. I may allow a few missions to be done, provided drone activity decreases. But otherwise, our activity level will remain the same. I wanted to bring this to you privately since I know that this decision affects you the most."

It felt like the ground had been pulled out from under him. Blurr's entire frame went eerily still.

Elita moved closer and gripped Blurr by the arm gently, concern rippling from her field as his fluctuated wildly. "*Blurr* speak to me. It's okay, this is not a punishment. I want to do whatever I can to help-"

Wheelie whined, his fledgling EM field crumpling under the weight of Blurr's distressed one. The noise brought Blurr out of his trance and he jerked, vents flaring wide to disperse excess heat and pedes skittering back until he was safely away from the *comfort-care-distress-confusion* radiating from Elita. The worst part- the worst part was that he understood. He couldn't even feel angry. She cared; she was keeping them safe.

She knew he was faster than the average mech and that meant the confinement might affect him more, but she didn't know the whole situation. He was too ashamed to tell her. Only Moonracer knew and he'd asked her to stay silent.

It was common knowledge that racers get antsy when kept idle and their sparks build up a little excess charge as a result. Despite it being possibly harmful, it wasn't considered to be too serious. And everyone knew he was fast- he was the fastest Cybertronian currently online. Probably the fastest *ever*. But what they didn't know was that his speed came at a price; his spark was just slightly too powerful for his frame type, a little too large for him to handle. If he stayed idle for too long it built up twice the amount of excess energy that another racer his size would have.

He would tell her, but his normal word-dump way of speaking failed him. And. And he didn't want to say it out loud. To admit that he was faulty. Forged incorrectly. It was too much. Instead of confessing, Blurr nodded, his blue optics focused on the floor.

"I'm fine Elita One ma'am I just was surprised that's all-that's all but no worries no problem thank you for letting me know but if you don't mind I think-I think I will go back to my shift if that's all-" He ran away. Her voice echoed behind him but he didn't stop.

Pedes flying, he sprinted to his habsuite and barely had the presence of mind to place Wheelie carefully into the makeshift crib besides his berth before he collapsed on the floor, vents screaming and optics unfocused.

The door to his habsuite crashed open and Blurr didn't even notice.

"What-?" Moonracer gasped, optics wide with concern. When she spotted him, she closed the door behind her for privacy and rushed to the blue racer's side.

Soft green servos held his helm; pulled him close to her chassis where her field wrapped him in familiarity and safety. It frightened her to see him like this. It had never gotten this bad before!

Blurr probably thought she wouldn't notice how he'd changed these last few deca-cycles, but she did. He'd become morose. Sluggish and irritable. His normal, endearingly persnickety and playful personality was growing farther every day. He worried her. She knew it had to be related to the source of his incredible speed- his spark condition- and the confinement. She felt the effects of being trapped too but it was nothing like this.

Slowly, he calmed in her arms. Frame going disturbingly still. Blurr twisted and burrowed his helm into her neck, his vents whirring weakly.

"Want to tell me what happened?" Moonracer asked, servo stroking his helm, avoiding his sensitive crest.

Moonracer had to clench her armor down tight to avoid lashing out when he told her how the talk with their leader had gone. *Extended lockdown?* They couldn't go on like this! Oh, she'd give Elita and the others a piece of her processor-

She stopped her train of thought when a white servo gripped hers. "Don't-!"

Blurr begged, his jumble of words near incoherent and optics wide, "-Don't tell her Moonracer don't say anything I'll be fine we'll be fine please-please-please don't do anything-!"

Moonracer pursed her lipplates. She didn't think it was safe or healthy for him to continue like this, but she nodded her assent anyway. She would hold her glossa. But... if anything got worse, she wouldn't be able to keep her promise of silence any longer.

[Three Quartexes into Lockdown]

A grim air hung around the Autobots as they prepared for their mission.

Elita watched them as they worked. Firestar cleaned her wheels and tuned gears in preparation. Chromia assembled her blaster. Greenlight and Lancer flitted about blinking monitors; plotting their course to Shockwave's energon warehouse.

Moonracer and Blurr were safely tucked away with Wheelie. They would be sitting this mission out. Blurr had been... concerning these last few cycles, to say the least. Elita was not sure what was going on between the two racers but whatever it was, it worried her. She was very close to ordering Firestar to perform a diagnostic scan on the faster racer. She'd wanted him to feel comfortable enough to bring any concerns to her -as she was very certain that his reactions to the confinement were not normal for racers, even with his speed- but he refused to do so.

Elita sighed and shook her helm. Hopefully this run would go well and she would be able to lift the lockdown early. Their energy readings had confirmed that Shockwave had not moved his energon stash since their last outing. Perhaps they were in the clear. She hoped they were.

Once her team was ready, all four femmes assembled in a neat row behind her and she led them up the hatch to the outside world once more.

"Autobots!" She called; voice low but carrying. "Transform and roll out."

They hurried down crumbling roads, weaving around areas hot with drones. She wanted this mission to be a quick one.

High above the Autobots, perched in a dilapidated grey tower, three seekers watched silently. Two took flight, following after the group of Autobots, while the third broke off to trace the femmes' steps backwards.

—

Blurr picked listlessly at a peeling chunk of orange metal on the wall. Wheelie was curled in his lap, engine humming while he recharged. He barely twitched as the door to his hab opened.

"Alright." Moonracer stomped in, face plates set into a determined expression. She tossed a lump of mesh at his helm and he barely caught it before it hit him. Fumbling in surprise, Blurr unraveled the mesh and found it was a sparkling sling.

When he only stared in confusion, Moonracer huffed and rolled her optics. “Well? Don’t take all cycle! Put it on and let’s blow this energon-stand.”

“What?” Blurr squawked, processor finally catching up. “We can’t leave! Elita-One specifically said we couldn’t go out and not to mention what if they need us and we’re not here or if they get back before we do then we’ll be in so-so-so much trouble and I don’t want to be in more trouble-”

Moonracer smiled. This was the most Blurr had said in the last few cycles! She had started to miss his annoying voice.

“Blah blah- don’t play coy! I know you want to go...” Moonracer crooned. She placed Wheelie into the sling when Blurr remained hesitant to do it himself. The mechling fussed at being awoken but settled when she shoved his predacon toy into the sling with him.

“We won’t get caught. But if we do, we’ll just say it was my idea.” She chirped. She grabbed both of their weapons and subspaced hers.

A complicated series of emotions flickered across Blurr’s face plates, before finally settling on excitement.

“Okay-okay-okay we’ll go but if we get caught this was one-hundred-percent your-fault.”

‘Yes!’ Moonracer mentally punched a servo into the air as she slipped the sling and a blaster onto Blurr and ushered him toward the hatch.

—

All five Autobots crouched behind an electricity supply line; one of the few huge heavily armored pipelines that ran across Cybertron’s surface to supply non-energon based energy to different cities. If its contents were less unstable, and if the Autobots possessed the technology to refine it into energon, Elita might have considered just tapping into one and forgone stealing from Shockwave altogether, but as it was, they were too complicated and dangerous to try and tamper with. The electricity within them wasn’t easy to refine, and was more liable to explode if handled incorrectly.

It hummed faintly, it’s power serving to scramble their energy signatures.

There were no drones working at the front entrance of Shockwave’s warehouse this time, so Elita signaled her Autobots to follow her around the building. Abandoning the pipeline and slinking up the sides of the warehouse. It was night, and though that had made little difference when Cybertron had been at its height –millions of florescent lights creating an eternal daylight whenever Hadeen set- it was now to their advantage. Shockwave was (Elita grudgingly had to admit) reasonably frugal with his power usage, and now most sectors remained dark.

They used the darkness as their cover as Greenlight pried open a lock keypad to a back door and rewired the circuits. With a muted *hiss* the backdoor slid open, revealing a long corridor.

:: Lancer, keep watch out here. The rest of you, follow me. :: Elita commed. The large purple and orange femme snapped into an alert position at the entrance and nodded seriously.

Pedes near-silent, the femmes crept down the hall with their blasters held aloft. They took a couple of false turns in the dark and had to double back before they made it to the main area of the warehouse. Hundreds of energon cubes glowed dimly, twisting their tanks with hunger.

Firestar, Chromia, and Greenlight rushed forward and began gathering up cubes. More this time than usual, as per Elita's new orders.

Elita moved to help but froze. Processor buzzing and spinal struts seizing up. Something wasn't right. Her audials twitched. It was quiet. Too quiet- there was no low hum of active drones. She glared at the energon cubes; something was off- *wait*.

"Autobots!" Elita called sharply. There weren't nearly as many cubes as last time, this had to be a- "Fall back!"

A low-energy blaster shot –a warning shot- painfully clipped her left shoulder pauldron from behind as she whipped around. Suddenly, there was the roaring sound of jet engines as two huge seekers burst into the room.

"Freeze, Autobot scum!" A plain purple seeker snarled, aiming his blaster at Chromia as she inched closer to Elita.

Greenlight placed a servo on Chromia's arm to hold her back as she barked insults at the seekers. Elita eyed the Decepticon's thick plating as she lifted her pistol slightly and set it to the highest setting. She had just one shot at this setting...

After one particularly aggressive insult from Chromia, the purple seeker lunged to attack. "Why you-!"

"Silence!" The second seeker snapped and moved in front of his comrade; his own weapons trained on the Autobot leader. Elita appraised him as her processor spun with escape plans. Despite being ensconced on Cybertron with the trine for the last one million kilocycles, she did not know the low-ranking seekers very well. Did not even know their designations. All that was apparent was that they were unimportant enough to be left behind by Megatron as Shockwave's lackeys on a dying planet.

The way the red seeker carried himself with wings aloft and spinal struts straight made it obvious he was the leader of his trine. He was boilingly, vividly red. From his optics to his pedes he shone like molten metal and bared sharp white denta at the femmes.

"So, it seems our elusive Autobots really do exist. You've been hiding so long, I'd started to wonder..." He drawled, flexing his wings. Elita pointed her pistol at him, daring.

“Yes, we exist. And we always will.”

The red seeker tutted. “I’d put that down if I were you. In fact- I’d surrender altogether. Good little thieves should realize when it’s time to give up. When it’s time to be *afraid*.” He shifted, drawing attention to his in-built missile launcher. Biolights around the missiles glinted brightly as a sign that they’d been activated.

“I know no fear.” Elita intoned, then promptly shifted her aim and shot the purple seeker.

The red seeker was bluffing. It was unlikely that he would release missiles in an enclosed space with volatile energon cubes right behind his targets. The purple seeker, on the other servo, was inching uncomfortably close to Greenlight.

Her pistol at full fire-power tore into the purple seeker’s plating with ease and blew straight through his helm; leaving a gaping hole and singed wires where his scowling face had once been. The red seeker cried out- Elita gave him no time to be shocked at the sight of his trine mate’s face-less smoking frame. She tossed her now-useless weapon aside and lunged, tackling the seeker to the ground. Greenlight, Firestar, and Chromia jumped into action behind her, gathering as many cubes as possible and moving towards the exit.

The seeker rolled, moving with Elita and throwing her off. He swiped a clawed servo and ripped a chunk of metal from Elita’s singed shoulder. She winced and backed away quickly, energon leaking through her fingers where she clutched her injured pauldron.

Advancing, the seeker crowded Elita towards a wall. He seethed- denta gnashing and optics bleeding rage.

“I’ll tear you apart!” He screamed, lashing out and gripping her forearms, lifting her and pulling her arms in opposite directions. Her joints popped and sizzled and groaned. Gears ripped out of alignment. Wires snapped.

She twisted in his grip, swinging up a leg and kicking hard at the sensitive cabling in the juncture between his thigh and his armored modesty panel. He reeled backward and Elita kicked again, slamming a pede into the armor over his spark chamber. As he shrieked Elita reversed their positions, pressing the huge seeker into the wall and delivering a punch to his dented chassis, grinding the heel of her servo into the damaged armor around his spark.

When she reared back to deliver another blow, the entire warehouse shook, throwing both of them to the ground.

The seeker got back on his pedes first, looking past her frame and out of the gaping front entrance. He stilled. Optics pale with shock.

Elita had to cover her face as his thrusters activated and he shot straight through the ceiling of the warehouse, fleeing desperately from the building. Confused, Elita turned to see what was happening.

Outside, another explosion shook the sector, mere kliks away from the warehouse. Then another- even closer.

‘Primus, the power line!’

Someone must have gotten through the armor over the pipes and blown up a section of the power line, and the entire pipeline was detonating as a chain reaction headed straight towards their warehouse full of highly flammable energon cubes-

Elita didn't even think. Alpha Trion's many warnings rung in her audials but she paid them no attention. Her optics slid shut as she activated special machinery inside her frame. It was a gift and a curse bestowed upon her by her creator. Her HUD flashed with warnings but she flicked them all away

As the device powered on within her, the world around her slowed.

Everything within a 100 klik radius was caught in an energy field radiating outward from her frame- the field slowed time itself. She leapt into action, running straight for Firestar and jerking her out of the influence of the time field.

“Elita! What-?”

“No time to talk. I need you to help me get the others.” Elita cut her off. Firestar was frustratingly slow for a moment -processing what was happening- before she too was moving. Elita held Greenlight as best she could with damaged arm sockets while Firestar carried Chromia, and together they ran as fast as possible down the corridors to the back entrance.

Lancer was there but her chassis was an energon splattered mess. The seekers had gotten to her first. Elita wasn't sure if she was alive and she didn't have time to check. She ordered Firestar to transform and loaded the three other femmes onto the bed of her truck alt-mode. Then she crawled onto Firestar and collapsed.

“Drive!” She ordered, and Firestar's tires screamed as she accelerated. “Get out of the sector, as far away from the explosion as possible, and hurry! I don't have much time...” Elita was slurring now, her chassis aching as her spark was drained in order to keep time frozen long enough for them to escape.

Beside her, Chromia and Greenlight were coming out of the time-hold. Lancer remained unresponsive.

“Elita-”

Elita gripped her friend's blue servo and looked into her optics grimly, cutting off Chromia's question.

“I don't have much time to explain. I have a device,” Elita pried open a panel on her abdomen, fingers curling back the pink painted metal to reveal the whirring mechanism within her frame. “It allows me to stop time for a while but it is a one-time use only. I will not survive once it has been activated.”

“No.” Chromia gasped, clutching harder at Elita. Greenlight whimpered and Firestar remained silent, only speeding up.

“No! We can help. What- What do you need? How do we fix-?” Chromia scrambled for words and Elita slumped further into Firestar’s truck bed, optics shuttering. Behind them, the frozen flames of the explosion started churning, moving glacially around shattering buildings.

“There is no fix.” Elita groaned.

“-But Alpha Trion might know, he might...” Her optics flickered and Chromia hugged her tighter. Elita used a bit of her energy to send a data burst to Chromia; estimated coordinates to Alpha Trion’s secret base that only she, as leader, had been privy to.

“Alpha Trion-” Elita seized, gears and joints locking into place as she slipped into emergency stasis. Cybertron erupted into sound and fire and motion behind them. The power line explosion had reached the warehouse, detonating the energon cubes within and spurring the destruction to higher levels as the entire horizon was decimated before their optics.

—

[Earlier]

Blurr did at least sixty loops, all of them the length of two of their bases combined.

It was pure bliss. His pistons working and pedes gliding through streets as he avoided drones and dangerous debris. Hadeen rose on the horizon. There were no clouds, and the red star’s thick rays warmed his plating and glinted off of metal and glass around him. Wheelie squealed into his audials, delighted.

Moonracer trailed behind him, clearly just as happy. Together they looped back towards the underground base’s entrance.

His vents were working at full capacity by time they reached the hidden hatch, steam rising from his heated plating as it reacted to the fading night-cycle chill. Wheelie tried to grab the steam with his servos.

“Thank-you-” Blurr blurted, glad in a way he couldn’t fully express. Moonracer took in his expression; glossy white face plates gleaming in the light from their sun, his blue optics slanted from the way his smile creased. She saved the memory someplace deep and safe in her processor.

“Oh, just come over here.” She chirped, and Blurr came, wrapping his gangly arms around her frame in a hug. Wheelie smushed gently between their chassis. It was warm and happy and perfect, just the three of them.

They both froze at the sound of a weapon powering up.

“Well, this is cute.”

Both racers whipped around, weapons immediately drawn and pointed at the intruder. A pitch-black seeker, as tall as two of them put together, loomed with a giant cannon aimed at them. His wings flared wide.

“Ooh, the sight just gets prettier and prettier.” The seeker leered, voice deep and uncomfortable. Blurr felt his plating crawl as red optics looked him over and his spark dropped when the Decepticon spotted Wheelie. A cruel smirk dripped across the seekers face.

“Maybe I should keep you two to myself, this planet’s got enough space for a few more bitlets. Could use some new little seekers...” Blurr’s fuel tank roiled at the idea and he shifted back as the seeker drew closer.

“Stop right there, pervert.” Moonracer snapped, her sniping rifle aimed threateningly. “And shut your intake. Any sparkling of yours would be aft-ugly.”

The seeker laughed. He tossed his helm back, and his neck cabling was too armored for Moonracer to shoot. In fact, the whole seeker was very thoroughly armored. It would take far more than a rifle shot or a blaster to hurt him. Blurr cursed inwardly. If he hadn’t wasted most of his energy on that joyride he could’ve zipped all three of them safely away in nano-seconds.

“You’ve got spark. I like that.” The seeker turned appreciative optics on Moonracer. “It’s a shame you’ll have to die, sweet-spark. I’ve waited so long for you and your pretty little friend to return so I could kill you in front of your base. I can’t deny myself that pleasure now.”

The black seeker aimed his cannon, white biolights flashing in a way that made Blurr nauseous. He held Wheelie tighter and panicked. His blaster wouldn’t be able to do anything and he couldn’t run past the seeker with Wheelie strapped vulnerably to his chassis and Moonracer clinging to him how would they get out think-think-think-think-

:: Blurr. On my signal, I need you to run as fast as you can away from this sector. ::

Blurr barely caught himself from jumping in surprise at the comm.

:: What are you planning what are you going to do I’m not going to leave you here I’m not- ::

:: Focus! Can you do it? I need you to be able to run. :: From the corner of his optics Blurr saw her adjust her rifle away from the seeker. He could run, but not safely if the seeker was on his tail. If Moonracer could distract him...

:: I-can-do-it. :: He confirmed.

:: But what are you going to do please-please tell me I can help please just tell me- ::

Moonracer fired.

The shot flew off in the complete opposite direction of the seeker. It echoed as it pinged around, bouncing off of metallic surfaces somewhere to their left.

“Hah, little Autobot, I think your targeting system is-”

“Blurr: Now.” Moonracer ordered, and the world burst into chaos.

Blurr felt horror strike him as he realized she had managed to somehow bounce a shot perfectly into the exposed power pipeline that ran through their sector. He couldn't even comprehend how she could've found a weakness in the pipeline's armor and aimed a shot into it, and it made his processor stall for a moment until Wheelie cried out, and the noise sent Blurr off; sprinting as fast as he could while energy depleted and carrying a sparkling. He made the mistake of looking back, expecting Moonracer to be a step behind him.

The black seeker was closer to the pipeline, and so was disintegrated into black specks of paint and metal. His optics turned to ash in his helm as he was completely destroyed, and Moonracer- Blurr had to force his pedes to keep going, to not trip, while staring backwards at her. Moonracer splintered. Caught up in the blast behind him, she wasn't fast enough. Her plating expanded outwards and shattered into a million green pieces that reflected the burning fire. Her lips pursed in some silent yell, optics shining, before she was gone. Swallowed by the explosion.

And Blurr ran, and ran, and ran.

Chapter End Notes

if you see a plot hole or something that doesn't make sense no you didnt <3

Also sorry for the lack of Shockwave in this one! He's coming soon i promise 😭

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Minor chapter warning: some kind-of breastfeeding and kind-of cannibalism??

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“You thought well of the days, when they were good, / Oblivious to the ills destined for one.”

- Arabian Nights

Blurr didn't cry. He manually shut off the coding that released coolant from his optics so that he physically could not do it. It would have been a waste of coolant.

Instead, he dry heaved. Tank churning as he crouched in some underground tunnel. Wheelie wailed behind him, cranky and uncomfortable and overwhelmed by Blurr's rapidly-flickering EM field. Gathering himself, he stepped towards the youngling and lifted him into his arms. He batted down his EM field and forced it into a low pulse that wouldn't disturb the youngling while he curled himself into a ball around him.

Blurr had woken from recharge due to a bad night flux. He tried not to think about who it had been about.

He forced himself to calm down, which should have been a hard thing for him to do, but his waning fuel level helped lull him into an exhausted half-recharge. One servo stroked Wheelie's helm as he blinked; staring out at the vast blue metal tunnel around them that was lit dimly by wiring and reflected light. A putrid oil river sludged onward below the raised walking platform that he'd hidden himself and Wheelie away on. Its scent was distracting.

Blurr had quickly realized that the underground tunnels surrounding the mass transit system were largely devoid of drone activity and would be the perfect place to hide. Not to mention, the surface was not exactly sparkling-friendly at the moment. Blurr had not been able to see full the extent of the damage, but from what he saw it seemed that half of Iacon had been completely destroyed along with their base.

Drones had swarmed the explosion sites; no doubt Shockwave's attempt to put out fires and assess the damage. Due to that, Blurr had been unable to scout out the warehouse or the base

for signs of Elita and his teammates. He commed them at least twice every cycle and received nothing but static in return.

They could be out of range but... it was unlikely they had escaped in time to avoid the explosion.

His spark felt cold and numb at the thought- at the realization that he was most likely, without much-of-a-doubt, the only Autobot left on Cybertron. His teammates. His *friends*. They were all gone.

Grief shivered down his spinal strut as he buried his helm against Wheelie's soft little chassis. No tears came. The sparkling drooled on his left audial but thankfully did not start whining.

Well. He wasn't the *only* Autobot on Cybertron. Alpha Trion still functioned, but Blurr had no clue where his base was located -only Elita had been allowed that information- and he didn't have the fuel to go searching around the planet for him. Not to mention, the mech was old. Blurr felt bad for thinking it but it was doubtful the older mech would function much longer anyway. There was also Wheelie. But Wheelie wasn't an Autobot, he was a sparkling! He couldn't help Blurr, or tell him what to do, or keep him safe. If anything, Wheelie was a liability.

Already, the mechling had wailed at inopportune times and nearly exposed their location to drones. He had to scavenge for extra fuel for Wheelie, and had to run slower in order to not throw him from the sparkling sling. Wheelie wasn't a fun distraction anymore; he was a main stressor in Blurr's struggle to survive.

But Blurr had realized all this recently anyway. He cried at least once a cycle about it so far and had ranted at a wall for a whole joor on how terrible it was.

As if summoned by his thoughts, a tiny servo grabbed Blurr's nasal ridge.

He shifted, moving to prop himself up on his elbow joints to look down at the orange sparkling. Wheelie blinked at him. Big blue optics watched him as if he were the only thing on the entire planet. Something in the blue mech's spark felt warm whenever the sparkling looked at him. Wheelie was so young; so new and exciting and full of potential. Blurr wanted to gather him into his arms and keep him away from everything that could hurt him.

Subconsciously, his arms scooted forward to roll the sparkling closer to him. He stopped halfway and frowned, staring at him shrewdly.

Wheelie looked *bad*.

His normally shiny orange paint was greyish and dull, round protoform cheeks and stomach were sunken in, and he was quiet. Wheelie was a chirpy bitlet, there was no end to his odd whistles and beeps and coos, but now he was subdued. The only noises he'd made in the last few cycles were cries.

Wheelie wriggled on the ground. He struggled, and Blurr watched, until his cheek pressed against Blurr's windshield, directly over the racer's spark chamber. A sigh puffed out of his

tiny vents once he was close enough, as if he was comforted by the constant hyper-pulse of Blurr's spark.

Epiphany hit him like a blaster shot. Wheelie was *his* sparkling now. And Blurr was his carrier in all ways except physical. He wasn't just sparkling-sitting anymore; he was the only bot on the planet that could take care of Wheelie and- and Wheelie was *his*. Blurr's vents hitched and stuttered, his pedes twitching, as his processor accepted the idea that he had a sparkling of his own and would have him until he offlined. Which hopefully would not be anytime soon since Blurr really-really-really did not want to die.

Distraught at the sight of his sparkling -the only thing that Blurr had left- looking so malnourished, he leapt to his pedes. A wave of determination rushed through his lines.

"I'm not going to rust away in this Primus-forsaken tunnel no-way-no-way and you aren't either I promise we're going to find our way out of this-" Wheelie finally chirped, blinking as the courier gently but swiftly placed him into the sparkling sling across his chassis, "- hopefully I won't go crazy trying and we won't get caught or shot at, but that's all at a 89.67% risk of happening at the moment and I'm already talking to a dumb -wait I take that back you're not dumb Wheelie please don't remember that- sparkling so I think our chances of survival aren't looking-too-hot but we can do this we have to try-!"

Wheelie let out two supportive beeps, to which Blurr nodded his helm seriously, as if Wheelie had said something inspirational.

Then he was off; darting through the tunnels towards the surface.

It was easier said than done, of course. His fuel levels were already low and the surface was fraught with danger at every turn.

Blurr scavenged what energon he could- which was frighteningly little. The majority of it went to his bitlet, who's paint nanites seemed to be functioning better for it.

Most of his time since he'd left the tunnels was spent crouching in decayed buildings and crawling under rubble to avoid detection. He'd had to become clever in order to avoid capture since his speed was hindered, and it was much-much-much harder to do than he'd thought it would be. How had Moonracer -his spark seized at the thought of her designation- done it? She had always come up with plans so effortlessly. She was never as fast as him, but she could devise so many confusing maneuvers and cutoffs and shortcuts that helped her wiggle her way into beating Blurr in a race more than once. He never understood it. To him, it was the road and the finish line. He had a goal and he went for it straight on. Tricks were never needed when you could leave all your competition in the dust in astro-seconds.

Now, he had no such advantage.

He'd started using diversions to draw drones' attentions away from them; audio recording devices he'd stumbled upon in an old apartment building were strapped to different street signs and set to play recordings of him speaking that drew the drones away, small traps were

laid in rubble to snag in wheels and slow them down, and he'd smeared ash from burnt buildings onto his and Wheelie's plating to hide their bright coloring.

It all was working! Especially as his energon levels dropped, he was able to take down a couple of wandering drones without working too hard. It made him uncomfortable, but he had begun prying open the offlined drones and pulling out their rudimentary fuel tanks to siphon the small amounts of energon inside. The drones looked so similar to mecha in design that it made his servos tremble while he tore apart their unmoving frames.

He had to reassure himself constantly that they weren't alive; that they had no sparks.

All of this was working, for a while, but Blurr had forgotten that the drones had an master who was *far* more clever than him.

Shockwave, of course, took notice of the disturbances and missing drones. He updated their software to pick up distinctions between radio and vocalizer emitted noises, changed their tires out for ones that didn't tangle in wires as easily, and released more flying Sentinel models to patrol the areas Blurr frequented most. It was as terrifying as it was *annoying*.

Blurr cursed the day that one-opticked menace had been created.

He caught glimpses of said menace surprisingly often. Shockwave's Decepticon base was tall and well kept; arrogantly obvious against its crumbling Iacon backdrop. Shockwave had been lucky that his base had been well out of the way of the power line explosion, in another sector of Iacon entirely. Blurr was not so fortunate- and he had still been unable to scout out the explosion site, though not from lack of want or effort- it was simply unsafe for sparklings at the moment. Blurr couldn't risk Wheelie's safety just to sate his need for closure, and was thus forced to inhabit the same sector as Shockwave.

Disturbingly, he and the mad scientist shared a similar schedule.

Every cycle, as soon as dawn hits the horizon, Blurr would crawl out from whatever hideaway he'd bunked down in with Wheelie to begin his search for fuel, and from the corner of his optics he'd catch movement at the top of the looming Decepticon tower.

Nothing more than a thin purple silhouette from a distance, almost comically small; Shockwave could be spotted emerging from his lair to stalk his balcony. He would -and Blurr had timed it a few times when he grew bored and suspicious- linger there for exactly half a breem before he would rush back inside to perform some duty. What exactly that duty was, Blurr was not sure.

Blurr watched him now, out of some morbid curiosity, as the Decepticon paced his balcony more agitatedly than usual.

Wheelie, cradled to his chassis, mouthed at his windshield with hungry impatience. Right-right-right. He'd better get a move-on before his sparkling decides to scream his helm off.

After one last glance at the Decepticon, Blurr gently nudged Wheelie's intake away from his chassis to keep him from ingesting any of the ash smeared on his frame, and leapt off into a

light jog. Zipping through abandoned streets at a fraction of his normal speed; running felt emptier to him nowadays. There was no joy in survival and no comfort in his function. Moonracer's ghost seemed to haunt him. He still caught himself turning to talk to her or smile or tease and stop short at the sight of empty road behind him.

His antenna-crest picked up on movement ahead so he veered left to duck into an abandoned corner store. Squatting low, he waited impatiently for the Sentinels to pass.

There were... less drones than normal. They passed by too quickly and none had been snared in his new traps.

Blurr scowled and grumbled to himself. He'd have to pick off one himself. A difficult task to achieve with a hungry sparkling strapped to his chassis.

Determined, he unsubspaced his blaster and slunk closer to the slow rolling drones. He was no sharp-shooter and hunger certainly did not help to keep his servos steady. He wished Moonracer were there to help him as he lined up his shot. He vented quickly. Anxiety roiled across his plating.

One-two-*click*.

He pulled the trigger too soon and the shot flew harmlessly past his target and struck a waste bin, sending sparks flying and rattling the bin. '*Oh not good-not-good-not-good-*'

Alert, the mechanic Sentinels immediately swerved to face his position and let loose a volley of energy blasts. Blurr dove down to hide behind a chunk of drywall and metal, curling his frame around Wheelie. His servo clenched his blaster, joints creaking with stress as he prepared to shoot back when he heard *it*; the sound of a jet engine roaring overhead and closing in fast. A memory of black wings flashed across his mind and sent him into a paralyzed shock. His pedes froze and too-large spark strained against its chamber.

He hadn't seen a seeker since *that* cycle.

Trapped by his own terror, Blurr held still as a statue around Wheelie as he heard the seeker touch down in the street behind his hiding spot. The seeker spared no taunting words; didn't even try to lure him out. His snarled order sent ice through Blurr's circuits:

"Concentrate all firepower on the Autobot's hiding spot. *Now*." A death sentence. The drones clicked to obey, joints locking into position. Blurr looked around for a way to escape or defend himself. His optics landed on a gaping hole in the ground directly ahead of him. Rust had eaten away the edges of the hole and made it sharp and dangerous but it looked large enough for him to squeeze through. He tightened the sparkling sling and sprinted forward just as the drones fired, tumbling down into the hole.

It was darker and steeper than he'd expected. He fell a good way down but managed to catch himself before he crushed Wheelie when he landed. He didn't stop there. The seeker's harsh voice echoed overhead and Blurr hurried to move forward, or, more accurately, *downward*.

Delving deeper and deeper into the planet's underbelly than ever before. Blurr jumped, crawled, and shimmied around aging shards of metal and old debris until the haze of panic lifted from his frame and the seeker's voice no longer lingered around them.

Weary, Blurr slumped against a cracked wall and opened the sling clinging to his blue chassis. Wheelie smiled at him. He batted a servo against Blurr's windshield and beeped. Blurr frowned, snagging one of Wheelie's orange servos with one of his much larger ones to inspect it.

Wheelie's fingers were no longer annoyingly sticky. Just cold, and clammy.

A pang of grief struck his spark. He gathered up both of Wheelie's servos between his own and rubbed them, trying to encourage any warmth he could. His sparkling's engine squealed and he kicked his tiny pedes.

"No-no-no I'm not playing I'm getting you warm again so stay-put-stay-put-" Blurr chastised. The effect of it was ruined by the smile that stole across his lips as Wheelie wriggled and let out two long warbles. He wasted a little time entertaining his sparkling until the bitlet passed out from exhaustion. Just watching Wheelie helped wash away some of the stress from their escape.

Once Wheelie was again nestled in Blurr's arms, the courier cautiously examined their surroundings. He may have gone a bit overboard in his escape and they might be just-a-bit lost.

Nothing looked familiar.

This far underneath the surface only the veins of great wires and pipelines kept everything aglow with an eerie pink hue. Ancient buildings half-crumbled from time lay toppled around them. The curves of their walls and windows were strange; a different architectural style from the surface. Blurr wandered curiously through the ruins, walking instead of jogging in order to conserve fuel.

As he went, he gradually crept lower and lower into the planet.

The buildings changed around him. Gentle curves and terraced towers became blocky and rigid neighborhoods. Very utilitarian. These new buildings looked even older, yet had withstood time better than the others. A few more levels down and the city changed again. Becoming harsh, jagged. Windows narrow and sparse. Then again, this time frivolous and extravagant; large windows and long-dead crystal gardens, sloping archways and lavish roads, all now ragged from disuse. Nothing remained constant except for the state of decay and abandonment on every level.

Something crunched beneath Blurr's pede, and he looked down absently.

He gasped and flinched back, shocking Wheelie out of his recharge. In front of him lied a semi-crushed servo attached to the greyed husk of a mech who'd offlined long ago.

“Don’t-don’t-don’t look!” Blurr pressed Wheelie back into the sling to keep him from watching and inched closer to the body.

It was sprawled as if its last moments were in attempt to crawl away. Behind it was another corpse, similarly prostrated. Both coated with dust and rusted beyond recognition. Something glinted faintly from the first frame’s wrist gauntlet. Blurr cautiously wiped away some of the grime and froze.

Though dull and worn, the Decepticon brand mocked him. Blurr hissed, retracted his servo, and moved to the other frame. This one too-

‘No-no-no-no. What?’ The other frame was an Autobot. Blurr raised his gaze to peer out at the ancient road in front of him and his optics caught more and more dead frames. His crest tingled; sensitive antenna picking up no signs of life. Frantic, he rushed forward and checked each for brands. Autobot. Autobot. Decepticon. Neutral. Decepticon. The bodies numbered in the hundreds. So many, and the death toll was devastating for both factions and the neutrals.

Bile threatened to force its way out of Blurr’s intake but he forced it back down. He kept looking. His processor began to heat up to an unsafe degree. Warnings flashed on his HUD. Too-large spark pulsed harshly in his chamber.

The next offline frame was a femme. She was-

“Chromia?” Blurr gasped, vocalizer full of static. Chromia’s blue plating was seared and burned to oblivion. Armor practically rotted from her protoform, her optics grey and cracked. Blurr pressed a trembling servo to her cold arm. No tears came. He looked to the left of her frame. Greenlight, Lancer, Firestar, and- and *Elita One* were discarded around him. Their armor was curled, charred, singed black.

The courier stumbled, near incoherent babbling escaping him until something gripped his wrist and spun him around.

“*Blurr.*” Moonracer rasped.

His engine howled in distress. Moonracer was covered in thin cracks like a shattered vase, painstakingly pieced together again. Slivers of firelight shimmered through the crevices as if she was still burning from within. Blurr was frozen, terrified to move and shatter her again. Her other servo clutched something golden and clean and utterly out of place close to her crackling frame.

Thousands of dead helms shifted on the ground to stare at him; the sound a cacophony.

A million voices thundered through Moonracer’s intake as she spoke two words:

“*End this.*”

Blurr screamed and ripped himself away from her; joints sparking with excess charge as he ran at his highest speed to escape. He barreled past every city and flung himself across gaping chasms in between levels. His pounding steps echoed around them as he ran from the that

horrible place- that *tomb*. All of those cities; all of the roads, tunnels, buildings, and levels were the past shells of Iacon. Destroyed and forgotten and built over again and again as the Cybertronian civil war raged on.

Virtually blind in his panic, Blurr ran upward until he reached a maintenance tunnel at least three levels down from the surface. His fuel level dropped to a dangerous *15.6%*. His emergency systems forced his legs to lock up mid-run. He crashed. Arms cupped protectively around his sparkling as his plating scraped against the ground. The last thing he remembered was the sound of his vents whirring, before he was knocked unconscious.

--

Wheelie's sobbing was the first noise he heard when he finally online'd a few joors later.

"Oh no-no-no are you alright Wheelie it's okay we're okay I'm sorry-I'm sorry!" He jerked upright and gathered his sparkling to fret over and examine him. His processor lagged behind as it tried to catch up to his surroundings. He moved to stroke the bill on Wheelie's helm but something was dangling from his left servo- Oh *scrap*.

Blurr shrieked and flung his arm out, sending the detached grey arm that had been clenched in his servo clattering across the floor. He scrambled sideways on his aft a few feet and looked back down at Wheelie.

He chirred a bit but otherwise looked fine. Angry high-pitched beeps fussed at Blurr and the courier rubbed his nasal ridge against his sparkling's as an apology.

Wheelie merely glared at him, unimpressed, and opened his intake to release his terrible '*feed-me-immediately*' wail.

Blurr drooped with exhaustion, armor sagging on his protoform. '*Great-great-great-great. Just. Great.*'

He checked his HUD to see how his own fuel level was. *14.45%*. Hm. Not good at all. Definitely not-definitely not. And he had no energon, cubes or otherwise.

He could... try something he'd read about in one of the sparkling care manuals Chromia had managed to procure for him and Moonracer before everything had gone to slag. Where she had found them, Blurr wasn't sure, but the things he'd learned from them were strange yet helpful.

Impatient, he touched a servo to his left side, tracing upward to the undercarriage of his chassis until his fingers stuck on a small raised panel near his upper abdomen. He dug his fingers in and manually opened the panel to expose a clear medium sized tube surrounded by sensory wiring. The care manuals had shared a trick many carriers had noticed about their frames: one of the minor energon lines in most bot's chassis could be disconnected on one end and unspooled to feed a sparkling with. It was usually only active after carriage, but it

would also work if enough suction was used. This line in particular would be full of safely filtered energon straight from his digestive tank.

He fumbled with it. It felt odd-strange-weird-

Once it was pressed to Wheelie's intake though, all awkwardness vanished. Wheelie latched on eagerly. Optics going glassy as he sucked hard enough to get the line flowing. Blurr sighed, too tired to feel glad it had worked. He kept a part of his processor sectioned off to monitor his fuel levels; he wanted to make sure Wheelie got enough fuel without killing himself in the process.

The courier's optics flicked back to the severed arm discarded across the tunnel.

It wasn't Moonracer's arm. It was a random mech's arm.

In order to confirm his suspicions, Blurr hesitantly accessed his recent memory files. They were corrupted, no doubt from his stress-induced overheating, but were clear enough for him to see what had really happened.

The femme frame he had found had not been Chromia. The others, also, were not his teammates. It had been a stress hallucination, or perhaps a bad virus caught from contact with so many offline frames. It was disturbing to rewatch his optical-audial feed and witness himself talking to nothing. He should have heeded his HUD warnings. In fact, he never should have wandered so far in the first place. He just hadn't been thinking, and something had called to him. Urged him closer.

Or so he'd thought. Now he was out of fuel, that seeker was out for him, and Shockwave had figured out all his tricks.

He slumped against a wall and shuttered his optics.

Maybe he shouldn't have run all the way back up to the surface. It'd have been more fitting to starve to death down in the ruins with the others.

Ruins. Hmph. Blurr was somewhat young; forged a few thousand stellar cycles after start of the war, but before the Well had gone cold, all he had ever known *was* war, and even he hadn't realized that all that stuff was down there. Well, there had been a few entries in the records Alpha Trion had sent, but nothing really informa-

Oh-!

Alpha Trion's data files!

Blurr still had them; all of the hundreds of entries uploaded to his second data bank! He hadn't deleted them like he had planned to. Almost violently fast, he opened his second bank and brought the files up on his HUD. Maybe Alpha Trion had included his own base coordinates in one of the files...

It took forever. He had to go so *slow* -slow for him and his '*slow*' was still faster than other bots' '*fast*' - to conserve power. Eventually, he worked his way through every file (and-it-was-

a-lot).

'No! No no-no-nonono!' He punched his free servo into the ground beside him, then regretted wasting fuel on it.

It wasn't there! That old-useless-junkheap-dustbin of a mech hadn't included his base coordinates. Blurr still couldn't find Alpha Trion for help.

Dejected, he stared up at the dark metal ceiling of the service tunnel.

If Optimus Prime and the *Ark*, along with Megatron and his *Nemesis* had returned from wherever they'd disappeared to, Blurr surely would have been a hot target with the files he had. Any Decepticon worth their struts would be drooling coolant at idea of getting so much inside Autobot information. But now, it was worthless.

A ping came up on his HUD warning that his fuel had dipped to a horrifying 9.75%. Blurr gently pried the tube from Wheelie's intake and re-spooled it into his chassis. Wheelie gummed at his plating where the tube had been placed. Still seeking out more despite the tube being gone.

An idea popped into Blurr's processor.

Maybe... Shockwave would be the same? Megatron was gone, and had been gone - presumably offline, alongside Optimus and the rest of them- for over one million kilocycles, and yet Shockwave had made no move to take over power. Starscream would have declared himself ruler the moment Megatron left the planet, and one would think that any other bot would do the same. But no. Shockwave seemed like a staunchly loyal Decepticon. Shrewd, secretive, and sycophantic *Shockwave* probably still thought Megatron would come back. And if he thought Megatron would return, perhaps he'd still be interested in getting an upper hand on the Autobots in order to impress his leader. Maybe he would do anything for that advantage.

But... the half-forged plan in Blurr's processor would be treason! He would be betraying the Autobot cause, and his team. Giving the kind of intel he possessed to Shockwave would be sentencing the Autobot cause to the Well.

Though... technically, the Autobot cause *was* in the Well. Optimus and the others were MIA. Elita One and Blurr's teammates were gone; incinerated in a warehouse. And *Moonracer*-

What was there to fight for anymore? Blurr was starving. Wheelie was starving. Keeping his sparkling alive was first and foremost on his processor at the moment. At his current rate, following the Autobot cause was going to end with offlining.

Shakily, Blurr raised himself onto his pedes using the wall for help. Wheelie cooed at him, his vocalizer had that same strange sing-song quality to it and Blurr smiled down at him grimly, too tired to speak back.

He'd need to save his energy if he was going to see his plan through.

Chapter End Notes

ok ok ok next chp starts the actual blurr/sw arc im sooo slow sorry.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“But morning overtook Shahrazad, and she lapsed into silence, leaving King Shahrayar burning with curiosity to hear the rest of her story. ‘What is this compared to what I shall tell tomorrow night if the King spares me and lets me live?’

The King thought to himself, ‘I will spare her until I hear the rest of the story; then I will have her put to death the next day.’”

-Arabian Nights

Getting caught was the easy part.

“Wait wait-waitwaitwait!” Blurr thrust his arms into the air above his helm, Wheelie’s sling was strapped to his back plates instead of his windshield, and it jostled slightly as he tried not to shut down. Or look like he was going to shut down. “I surrender! Did you hear me I said surrender, as in: give up-quit-throw-in-the-towel-I’m done!”

The drones outside of the Decepticon tower paused. A red light blinked into existence on the left side of each one’s helm; a recording-transmitter device. He had drawn Shockwave’s attention.

Sure enough, the drones relaxed their stances but did not lower their weapons.

Blurr was lucky he was so deprived of energon. It felt like he was left waiting outside the tower for ages. At full power he would’ve been stomping his pedes in impatience.

At last, the drones twitched, then shuddered into formation tightly around him and ushered him into the tower. Blurr strained his neck cabling to peer over the drones and catch one last glimpse of the flickering city outside.

Wide streets and ruined buildings lied under the blue hue of dusk. Long-abandoned shops, bars, and apartments smoldered beneath the light of a million stars. He had never seen them when they were new or in use; had never known what it was like to live in a city *not* ravaged by war, and yet he hoped he would live to see the sight again.

The doors slid shut and forced him to turn his helm around and focus his attention on his surroundings.

It was not what he would have expected from a notoriously deranged Decepticon scientist's base. Light purple halls stretched onward, clean and smelling faintly of antiseptic. Everything was sensibly low-lit in order to conserve power, but that didn't help Blurr in the moment. He couldn't see very far down hallways or into rooms they passed. A scan from his crest told him there were no other Cybertronians in the immediate vicinity, and the radio signals he could pick up were all between the drones.

Wheelie shifted in the sling against his backplates. Blurr fluffed out his plating to try to soften the impact of his steps, and his sparkling settled back down.

Eventually, he was corralled into a small elevator, making his protoform itch. *'Too-small too-close too-'*

His vents hissed out a little steam once they reached their destination. The top floor?

Blue optics flicked around curiously. Wide windows, angled and inset into the ceiling, gave him a glimpse of the cold stars above the planet. His hyper-sensitive crest tingled from an overwhelming influx of data. Radio broadcasts, long range comms, and the strong pulse of another Cybertronian's electrical signal.

A large purple frame, bent over a display console, straightened as Blurr was forced to approach. He had to crane his helm to make contact with the other's optics- or *optic*- as Shockwave turned.

"Your surrender was a logical course of action. Surprising, coming from an Autobot." Shockwave rasped; vocalizer audibly worn with age. His single yellow optic glinted in the dim communication room.

Blurr fought not to clamp his armor and jostle Wheelie. He'd never interacted with Shockwave before. He really had no clue how to spin this to his advantage. Oh, what was he thinking this was the worst plan ever he was going to die-

"You must hope to gain something from this, if you are so desperate." Shockwave prompted when he remained silent. Blurr startled at the interruption to his inner panicking.

"Gain? Well not for me I mean sure I surrendered but how-else-am-I-supposed-to-get-your-attention since I have something that you could stand to gain from *me*." Blurr puffed his chassis and tried to look confident.

Shockwave's left finial flicked out as he considered Blurr for a moment, giving no indication of having struggled to understand his rapid speech. "You have something? I doubt it's value, at least in regard to how it could be of worth to me, but carry on. What is it you have?"

Irritation overwrote Blurr's fear as he scowled at Shockwave. "Do you know who Alpha Trion is-? I'm going to assume all you Decepticon creeps know everything so I'm sure you're aware that he possesses a great-great-great amount of information about anything and

everything that's happened or happening or planned-to-happen with the Autobot cause, and I just so happen to be the courier he entrusted with a data package packed full of Autobot secrets-" Blurr paused to squint at the Decepticon. "But I guess if that's of little worth to you I can just delete-"

"A data package? This would include battle strategies, blueprints-?"

"Yes, and much-much-much more!"

"And what is to stop me from prying this package out of your helm? You need not be functional for me to gain the information you claim to possess."

Blurr stamped a pede. Surprise and indignation colored his EM field.

"I would think that a scientist such as yourself would know more about basic cyber-biology but I guess I'll just-have-to-spell-it-out-for-you- I'm a courier model and you can't just yank the memory banks out of a courier model it won't give up so easily since my helm is designed to self-destruct at the slightest tampering of my memory banks in order to preserve the information I carry I can only relay packages through willingly vocalized messages."

Blurr stepped forward, closer to the looming scientist, while his fuel level dropped to 5.68%. "And before you start you don't need torture me to get me to talk I'll do it for free I'll sing like a cyber-canary I'll spill it all no-extra-effort-needed-"

Shockwave leaned down, his single optic coming sickeningly close to Blurr's face plates, and the racer clamped his armor *hard*. Blurr had never seen a mech with no face. Visors, masks, sure, but no intake or facial features altogether? Never. It was unnerving.

"Why should I trust you, or the information you want to give me? It is far more likely that this is some trick- a scheme to undermine me. I find it quite hard to believe that the same Autobot that undoubtedly caused the destruction of half of the *city*-" Shockwave droned, somehow monotone and livid. Blurr flinched. "-just to escape capture, would now surrender. No, you want something."

"I-" Blurr started, but a sudden whine cut him off. *'Scrap no not yet-not-'*

Shockwave straightened in alarm and levered his cannon arm at Blurr. The business end sparked with charge. "Turn around, Autobot."

"No-no-no-no I-please-let-me-let-me-explain-I-can-show-you-I-promise-"

"Turn around. I'll not repeat myself again."

A chill shivered down Blurr's struts.

He turned, slow as he could manage, and held as still as possible. Heat engulfed Blurr's narrow lower back plating as Shockwave's large servo hovered there for a moment. Slowly, horribly slowly, his servo moved up toward the sling.

Wheelie warbled pathetically, and Blurr's EM field stretched out to buffer him and try to comfort.

"A sparkling?"

He couldn't take it anymore- Blurr took advantage of Shockwave's surprise and whipped back around, pulling the sling to his front to cradle Wheelie close.

"My-sparkling." Blurr snapped and revved his engine threateningly despite the fact that it shaved 0.56 % off of his fuel tank. Shockwave merely stared, his optic revealed nothing, but his finials flicked back and out in what Blurr assumed was his way of expressing surprise.

"Foolish." Shockwave commented, his helm tilted down to let his optic scan Blurr from pede to crest. "Illogical. To create a sparkling in the middle of a war, and while so young."

Blurr's lines burned. *'Presumptuous-snobby-rude-old-slagger who does he think he is even if Wheelie was actually mine I should-'*

"That is irrelevant right now don't-bring-it-up!" Blurr spluttered, pointing a finger at the Decepticon. "What matters is that you're right I do need something- I need energon for Wheelie and *you've* got it and I've got information that will more than pay for us to fuel and I'll give it to you if you-"

"No."

"-if you- What?" Blurr's intake paused half-open.

"No." Shockwave lowered his cannon, but the air of threat did not leave his EM field. If anything, it felt worse. "You'll give me that information now. Then, I will offline-"

"-You-can't! You can't do that to Wheelie he's just a sparkling-!"

Shockwave's right finial snapped once. "It would be unwise to offline a sparkling when our race is at near-extinction."

'Oh.' Blurr blinked. Shockwave meant to eliminate Blurr from the equation and keep Wheelie and the information for himself. He probably wanted to turn Wheelie into some mini Decepticon or science experiment. No way-no way Blurr was going to let that happen-

'Think smart, Blurr.' A voice -Moonracer's- echoed in his mind and stopped him before he blurted anything out. Right. Blurr's intake shut with a *click*. He took a moment to set his processor to work, quickly and thoroughly examining the situation so far.

Shockwave was underestimating the amount of data Blurr was in possession of. It would take *quartexes* to verbally relay everything he had saved. A data transfer to a console would be fast, but the information simply would not be able to be moved from his processor like that, unless it was an image file, like the blueprint files. It was clear Shockwave expected it to take a few joors, perhaps a cycle or two at most.

A memory of the Decepticon's daily morning ritual, that he never seemed to miss for anything, resurfaced in Blurr's processor. It was a risky thing to hinge his survival on, but...

"Alright-alright-alright." Blurr slumped his shoulders and looked away. He tried to appear properly cowed, too tired and starved to feel fear for real. "If it means Wheelie continues to function I'll do anything-anything-even-if-it-means-my-own-offlining."

"What heroism." Shockwave replied, vocalizer flat and markedly disinterested in the display of emotion.

He shifted on his pedes and gestured to two large console chairs. "Sit, and relay your data, Courier."

Blurr wove neatly around the larger bot, avoiding his oppressive EM field, and sat down. He took a moment to check on Wheelie; his sparkling's grey face plates were pale and drawn, streaked with ash, but he gave Blurr a gummy smile. Blurr watched him for as long as possible before he had to close the sling and open a file on his HUD. His spark pulsed painfully when he realized he would need to reveal something that would truly be beneficial to Shockwave in order to keep the scientist's attention. He'd have to sacrifice something big.

Across from him, Shockwave keyed a command in on his computer and the machine whirred to life. Blurr peered at it for a moment, recognizing the recording program that had been activated, then returned to activating his own courier programming.

A nano-sec and then-

As if electrocuted, Blurr's frame jolted, struts straightening into a stiff salute. His intake opened, stilted yet graceful as words from the file he'd chosen spilled out. His courier programming overpowered most emotion receptors in his processor when he accessed his memory files this way, and he felt his anxiety and grief and worry melt away. A familiar blankness replaced them.

"Message-from-Alpha-Trion. Item: File 307- File Designation: Autobot-Encampments-Bases-of Operation-and-Laboratories. Location Specified: Cybertron. First Entry..."

—

"...Location: approximately (-13.032590, -83.819469) Coordinates: 83° 49' 10.088" S 13° 1' 57.324" W. Laboratory #17 Function: Creation-and-testing-of-weapons-al-"

A ray of light came in through one of the wide windows, sudden and warm as it grazed across Blurr's armored thigh, causing him to pause and go silent. Joors had passed, the night wearing away until morning arrived and, just as the courier had anticipated, the first file was nowhere near finished.

Watching him, rapt, Shockwave leaned forward. His single optic focused intensely on Blurr until the light from Hadeen fell on his own purple plating. The Decepticon turned towards the

windows in subtle surprise.

“What is the amount of information left to be relayed?”

“File-status: 48% relayed.” Blurr answered, swaying in his seat while his fuel level pinged on his HUD at 2.03%. “-A-and there's much more left with things you'll be very-very-very-interested to-”

“Enough.” Shockwave rose and powered off the console. “I will investigate the coordinates you have supplied and see if you have been truthful. For now, you have bought yourself another cycle of life. Next cycle, once you have finished the package, you will not be so fortunate.”

He turned to look down at Blurr. “Get up.”

Embarrassed heat would have risen in Blurr's lines if he'd had enough fuel to do so. “I can't...” He slurred -and he'd never spoken so slow in his entire *life*- frame listing to the left. “Fuel-level: 1.65%”

Shockwave stared at him.

“You are operational at such a low fuel level?”

Blurr slumped in his chair and gurgled what may have been a response.

“Incredible. I have been unable to study any of the new models forged after the start of the war. Your earlier scorn towards my knowledge of cyber-biology was unwarranted, Courier. Your generation has proven notoriously hard to catch, and thus I have lacked in specimens to dissect. I wonder what other upgrades have been afforded to your frame...” Shockwave moved in close, his good servo twitching as if he wanted to cut Blurr open right then and there on the chair. Blurr squirmed away but his protoform felt like lead and his vision was going staticky-

Wheelie screeched. His little frame thrashed in the sling when Shockwave's dense EM field pressed over him.

Shockwave retreated at the sound; his attention shifting to the youngling. Finials twitched thoughtfully while he watched Wheelie squirm. “Ah, yes. We do have a deal. I suppose any scientific exploration can occur... posthumously.”

He moved away, though Blurr couldn't see it through his failing optics. His HUD was a mess of error messages and the slow countdown of his fuel gauge.

0.97%...

0.65%...

He felt strangely peaceful, heavy, and empty. It felt *wrong-wrong-wrong-wrong-*

0.45%...

Something huge engulfed Blurr's helm and tilted it around. Blurr jerked as his intake was pried open-

Thick, warm energon slid across his glossa and he gulped on instinct, causing some to spill onto his chin guard. The energon disappeared and the massive servo came back, gripping his helm, readjusting it for a moment, and then it left again and that wonderful, wonderful fuel returned.

Lost in bliss, Blurr drank and drank and drank until his tank pinged him at 65.78% . His optics rebooted, and he was met with the sight of an impassive Shockwave standing too-too close. The cube of energon he'd been drinking out of was shoved into his servos.

"Fuel yourself. I have wasted enough time here."

Fuel in servo, the drones that had been lingering in the corner of the room then closed in around Blurr and obscured his view of the mysterious morning task Shockwave had left to do. Cold, blocky servos gripped him under the arms and hauled him from his seat. Going from extreme hunger to a nearly full tank left his systems reeling, and his frame lagged in an odd state between clumsy fatigue and boundless energy. His reinvigorated spark spun wildly in his chassis, pressing against its chamber while he was herded back into the elevator. Halls passed by him in a daze and he only came back to himself as the drones pushed him into a cell and locked the door.

Knee joints shaking, Blurr stumbled his way to the bare berth and collapsed. He shuffled sideways and slid Wheelie out of his sling, curling his frame around his sparkling and putting his back to the door. Wheelie rolled around on the berth. Stubby legs kicking at Blurr's abdominal plating while he gnawed on his own servo. Indulgently, Blurr pulled the servo out of Wheelie's intake and rubbed his thumb over tiny finger joints for a moment, then propped himself on one arm to drink the rest of the cube while he kept an optic on his sparkling.

Fuel Level: 113.56%

A new alert flashed on his HUD warning that an automatic full-system reboot was imminent. The stress of near-deactivation from starvation was too much, and his frame would not be able to put it off. Hastily, he unspooled the feeding tube from his chassis and guided Wheelie to it.

His sparkling latched on viciously. For a moment, Blurr was glad that particular tube had no sensory receptors in it.

Anxious; he watched his fuel gauge. 'C'mon-C'mon-C'mon-'

His fingers tapped a nervous rhythm on the berth while his mind felt uncomfortably sluggish. He couldn't think, he kept coming up blank when he tried to focus on anything too hard. His frame, on the other servo, was twitching and shifting around with excess energy.

Fuel Level: 99.76%

Wheelie didn't need much to fill his tiny tank. Blurr was ever-thankful for that fact. He popped the tube out of Wheelie's intake and swaddled him with the ratty mesh blanket that'd been left on the berth. When he was finished wrapping Wheelie, his work was... a little lopsided. Wheelie kind of looked like a misshapen lump, but at least he wouldn't be crawling anywhere while Blurr was rebooting. Something Wheelie was angry about, if his pinched optical ridges and growling engine were any indicator.

And just in time, the countdown struck zero on his HUD, and Blurr fell, blue frame limp, into yet another hard reboot.

—

Something was stroking his helm.

Soft, even touches. Comforting and familiar metal from what he knew -even with his optics shuttered- was a light green servo trailed over the ridges of his plating. Blurr onlined his optics and shot Moonracer a sheepish smile.

"Did-I-recharge that's weird that's unusual sorry-about-that I don't remember going to recharge you would think I would remember something like that but-I-guess-not-"

"Blurr." Moonracer's serious tone stopped him. "You can't stop?"

Then he was running- but-he-was-still-lying-down? Pedes pounded on pavement; rough gravel scraped the undersides. A ringing noise whistled in his audials. His crest sensed signal after signal. Smoke clouded past his frame as something gold glinted in his servos-

He was lying down. His frame was locked still but he was *moving* he could feel it. The servo stroking his helm turned sharp. Palm like hot slicing wind, fingers gouging into circuitry and wiring. He should've run away, and he was, but he wasn't-

"Blurr." Moonracer gripped his helm and pulled it towards her. He was going so fast. Coolant leaked from her optics. Her brows were drawn in anger; her servo gripped him harder, crushing-crushing-*crunching* -

"You can't stop?"

Blurr sprung from the berth so fast he flung himself across his cell and into a wall.

"Oof-" He rubbed at a dent in his thigh. What a night flux.

"Ooph?" A voice tried to echo.

Sitting upright, Blurr felt *good*. His gears moved with ease. He hadn't had a tank filled to over 56 % in vorns, Elita's team had never had enough energon for that. Blurr's helm swiveled left and right to find his echo.

There. On the berth, small arms suspiciously free, Wheelie peeked at him with a denta-less smile. A whistle escaped his developing vocalizer, excited this time as he rolled his frame off the berth.

“Whoa! No-no-no-no-no rolling off the berth is not okay I don’t care if you can’t understand me that is not okay you could hit your helm or pop an arm out of a socket or crack your armor and then what-would-I-do-” Wheelie giggled when Blurr caught him and tiny fingers grabbed him with surprising strength. Blurr blinked. A grin spread across his lips.

“You feel good huh-? I bet you do I feel good too you know I’ll never let us go hungry again never-never-never! You look so good look at you- look at yourself! Wheelie no, that’s the ceiling.” Blurr tilted his sparkling’s helm down with a servo. “You’re-so-orange-!” He was very orange; paint nanites visibly healthy even under a layer of grime and ash. “-You’re such an unfortunate color sorry-Wheelie but I’ve never been so glad to see awful orange-orange-orange plating!” He squeezed Wheelie close and spun them both around and around.

His engine revved playfully while they spun and Wheelie mimicked his own engine back, vibrations travelling back and forth through their chassis. Eventually, Wheelie grew bored of spinning and smacked Blurr’s windshield until he was set on the ground.

Once free, the little terror stumbled around on wobbly joints, and Blurr couldn’t help himself at the sight. They were both racers, after all. He gave in to his instincts and chased after his bitlet, winding circles around the cell while Wheelie screeched in delight. They both practically bounced off of the steel walls; Blurr chased Wheelie around for a while, then lured the sparkling into trying to chase him instead, testing Wheelie’s growing reflexes until the youngling faceplanted from exhaustion.

Amused, Blurr gathered his recharging bitlet and tucked him comfortably onto the berth.

Lounging on the hard surface beside his sparkling, pedes kicking in the air, Blurr glanced around the cell with new optics.

He hadn’t realized just how many systems in his frame had been deactivated to conserve power. Everything looked sharper, sounded clearer, felt more intense to his sensors. His processor felt like it could do anything. *He* felt like he could do anything. Anxiety nipped at him when he thought about his current predicament but so did a strange sense of confidence. He’d survived the first night, hadn’t he? He and Wheelie were fed and rested and sheltered, weren’t they? He could do this. He just needed a game plan- one that his newly energized processor was all but chomping-at-the-bit to make.

A look at his chronometer told him he’d been rebooting for a little over half of the day cycle. It was nearing evening, and Shockwave had yet to return to Blurr and demand the rest of the files. Hm.

Promising.

Taking advantage of Wheelie napping and Shockwave’s prolonged absence, Blurr took the time to plot his next move.

Shockwave stood stock still in his laboratory while he monitored a large array of console screens. The faintest flicker of satisfaction trickled through him before it could be tamped down by his emotion suppressing protocols. Around him, his drones were a flurry of motion; hefting large projects and machinery confiscated from various Autobot labs, all of which were long abandoned and dusty, yet ripe with information and new revelations.

The courier had not lied. All of the coordinates he had supplied had led to a wealth of Autobot secrets just lying-in-wait for Shockwave's meticulous mind to pry them apart.

As if drawn by a magnet, Shockwave's processor fixated on the topic of the Autobot courier.

A mangy little thing. Wholly unimimidating when he had stood in Shockwave's presence while swaying with anxiety and soot-covered plating that was so grey from starvation that one could not determine what color it may have been originally. But he was clever, and quick. He'd evaded capture for quite some time since the explosion. Shockwave knew that he must be alone, as his surviving seeker had reported that the femme Autobot leader and a good amount of her team had been caught in the explosion. Curious, that the courier would set his teammates up for such disaster, for surely Shockwave's trine would have never disobeyed his commands so recklessly as to ignite a power line.

Many things about his new prisoner made Shockwave curious – the *only* emotion his protocols had yet to succeed in consistently suppressing- but foremost was his possession of the first frame-born sparkling created since the beginning of the war.

Idly, he typed out a list of materials he'd need to properly care for the sparkling, and sent it off to his drones for them to collect while he thought.

It was an irresponsible decision to create. A *deliberately* irresponsible decision, if one considered how difficult it was for most bots to carry, though an unsurprising thing when one considered the bot's youth and undoubtedly sentimental Autobot nature. But still. It had been quite some time since Shockwave had seen a sparkling.

Four millennia, to be precise.

Shockwave split his thought process for a moment to go over weapon schematics uncovered from one of the Autobot laboratories in Iacon -Wheeljack's- and he barely had to glance at them before he sent out a command to his drones to treat anything from *that* particular scientist's lab as sensitive and potentially high-risk material.

Clever the Autobot may be, but ingenuity could not be used as fuel and no amount of careful thievery or skillful evasion could sustain one in such a harrowing situation for long. Teammates deactivated, base destroyed, and saddled with a sparkling that required fuel that he did not have, it was only logical that the courier had surrendered to Shockwave in the end. And what a boon his desperation was- the information he carried was tempting and rewarding

beyond anything the scientist had found or experienced since Megatron's disappearance. One million kilocycles without exposure to new ideas, even mediocre ones scrounged up by Autobot scientists, had left Shockwave wanting for something new to set his processor to.

He itched for more, already, even as he still sent his drones out to plunder the rest of the coordinates provided by the Autobot. Perhaps he would keep the courier alive for yet another cycle... at least until the files were all relayed. Then Shockwave would rid himself of him.

Aside from the fact that he could not abide an Autobot being allowed to live, it was the reasonable course of action; the courier would only be a drain on his energon reserves and a corruptive influence on the sparkling.

The doors to the lab slid open with a muted *hiss* that drew him away from his musing.

"Where did all of this scrap come from?"

Irritable, as he so often was since his trine mates were offlined, the former trine-leader stomped into the room with a scowl, avoiding busy drones as he approached his superior officer. His once pristine red plating was now chipped and dull from lack of upkeep, and he held himself tensely in Shockwave's presence despite his disrespectful manner of speech.

When Shockwave kept his silence and continued tapping away at his console, Nacelle huffed.

"Where did all of this scrap come from, *sir*?" He repeated, stressing the last word with obvious distaste.

Slowly, Shockwave straightened to his full height and focused his single optic on the seeker.

"What is your progress with tracking the surviving Autobot?"

Nacelle's wings hiked in annoyance at the blatant dismissal of his question. "I've been unsuccessful in my attempts to find him since he retreated to the underground levels, sir. Seekers are meant for aerial pursuit, not rummaging around in sewers like grounders and scraplets."

"Then you will be relieved to know that you need not focus your attention on finding the Autobot any longer; he is here in my custody as a result of his own desperation, and not from your efforts. I find your productivity to be lacking. Results have not been forthcoming for some time, and it would be illogical to waste resources on something that is repeatedly unsuccessful."

Nacelle hissed, his denta bared from the action.

"You sparkless slagger. My trine mates are dead! You've barely given me time to grieve and you've already cut my rations. How am I supposed to function like this?"

"Emotional behavior is intolerable; if you cannot overcome it in order to adequately perform your duties, I may be forced to reevaluate your usefulness." Shockwave's arm cannon hummed in an unspoken threat. Energon was scarce, and the Autobots had already destroyed half of one of his stores. He would not waste a single drop more.

Sickly optics set inside a scuffed red face narrowed at Shockwave's cannon for a long moment. Then, Nacelle stood down, lowering his wings respectfully and shuffling backward a step.

“Not everyone is as eager to delete their emotions as you are, Shockwave.”

“I am aware of others’ attachment to emotion.” He replied, powering down his cannon and using his good servo to bring up a new aerial patrol route on his console. “However, in your predicament, you should consider the benefits of abandoning such partiality.”

Nacelle rolled his optics in an attempt to hide his obvious discomfort and focused his attention on the screen. “I’ll need more fuel if I have to fly over both Polyhex and Uraya on my patrols.” He paused and scratched his chin guard, “I don’t get why you still want me to do those anyway; everyone else on the planet is dead.”

“Your current ration size is more than enough for your frame specifications. I will consider increasing your rations, provided I am supplied with results.” He purposefully ignored Nacelle’s other question. It was pointless to remind the seeker of information he already knew; of the *outside* threats to their planet that they must remain vigilant and wary of.

“Fine.” Nacelle scowled, yet he avoided making optical contact. “Have fun with your new toys and Autobot pet. Oh wait, I forgot. ‘Joy’ is an *emotion*, and you don’t feel those, sir.”

With that last petty comment, Nacelle stormed from the lab, wings snapping as he went.

The disrespect rolled off of Shockwave’s back plating like oil. His mind had already returned to examining blueprints and project notes. He devoured information for an undeterminable amount of joors, carried away by his own work. It was only when a drone approached him with his daily cube of energon that he checked the time.

It was several joors past sunset, Hadeen’s light had long-vanished outside of his tower. He should pay a visit to the courier to extract the last of his information before next cycle.

Shockwave raised himself from his chair to retrieve another cube of energon and a servo-held recording device. He made his way uneventfully to the bowels of the tower where the cell block resided. It was only when he approached the cell where the courier was contained that his audials registered some sort of commotion.

He picked up his pace and rounded the corner, only to stop short at the sight inside the cell.

The courier was a blur of movement as he zipped around with impressive speed, jumping over the berth and kicking off of the walls. On the floor wobbled his tiny dirty sparkling, squealing and chirping as he tried to keep up with his carrier’s rapid movements. Shockwave watched, unnoticed, as the game of catch devolved into another game where the courier cajoled his sparkling into trying to find him while he hid behind the berth, out of the sparkling’s sight.

“I’m over here not over there if-I-was-over-there-my-voice-would-come-from-over-there-Wheelie-Wheelie come on come and get me you got it!” It seemed the Autobot’s –or rather,

the *racer's*- speech was naturally fast paced. Even quicker when fully energized than it had been when he was starved.

Abruptly, his behavior made sense. Two fully fueled race cars in a tiny cell were bound to grow restless.

Having observed enough, Shockwave let his pedes fall heavily on the ground when he approached the cell bars. At the noise, the courier snapped his helm up to focus bright blue optics on his captor. His gaze was far keener now that he was not on the brink of offlining, and the scientist watched as his lithe yet ash-smeared form rushed across the cell to snatch his sparkling and retreat to the berth.

Hunched like a wild turbofox backed into a corner, he remained on the berth while Shockwave entered the cell. No longer grey from starvation, he could see now that the courier was a mixture of shades of blue and white beneath all of the grime, and his sparkling was orange. There was a strange lack of similarities between carrier and creation; where the courier sported sleek facial features, a thin nasal ridge, and narrow optics, his creation had large optics and round features, wider and softer as opposed to his carrier's sharp looks.

Those narrow blue optics cut into Shockwave when he held up the cube of energon. They gleamed- covetous and hungry as he made sure to keep it out of the courier's reach.

"It seems that your information has proved useful, yet-" Shockwave held the cube back further when the Autobot inched closer. "I require the last of the files before I supply you with any more energon." A falsity. Shockwave was going to kill him after he got what he needed.

The Autobot huffed at that. One brow ridge twitched.

"Well how am I supposed to give you the files if I'm not fully fueled? What if I reboot and then I can't give them to you and not-to-mention I need to feed Wheelie or else he'll start whining while I'm talking and you don't want that his vocalizer is way too strong for something his size-"

In convenient demonstration, the sparkling in the courier's lap cried loud enough to make Shockwave's audials twinge, his miniscule servos reaching towards the cube. Shockwave paused at the display. While the courier's first argument was inane, his second point was logical. Sparklings had smaller tanks and needed frequent fueling.

"Very well," He conceded, vocalizer scratching over the words with near-tired acceptance. He could sacrifice *one* cube. "I will give you the fuel before you give me the files, if you but answer one question first."

Blue optical lights rolled insolently. The courier's vents huffed. "Sure-sure-sure go ahead and ask it's not like I'm already giving you everything I know or anything so-hurry-it-up Wheelie's getting hungry here and-"

"Why did you choose to ignite the power line?"

The courier stiffened. His helm turned away, drawing attention to the curve of his crest.

“I didn’t.”

“What?” Shockwave couldn’t contain the curious tilt of his left finial.

“I didn’t blow-up-the-power-line it wasn’t me.”

“If not you, then who is to blame for the destruction? How did you survive such an explosion?”

White lips twisted. “I thought it was just *one* question huh?”

Silence met the remark. Shockwave let it linger, allowing his prisoner a moment to provide him an actual reply. When he remained stubbornly silent, Shockwave took a step forward. His massive pede rattled the ground and shook the flimsy cell berth while he pressed his flat, heavy EM field down onto his prisoner.

His stance above the crouched Autobot brought their vast size difference to glaring attention. He watched passively as filthy blue plating rippled with fear.

“I didn’t do it my-my-my teammate did to help me escape so there’s no one left to blame except yourself for sending your seekers after us in the first place and even so If I had been in her position I’d have done the same thing or maybe even worse since I would have found a way to destroy all of Iacon to ensure *you* would be destroyed with me-” He reared onto his knees and clenched his servos at his sides while his speech devolved into something rapid, vicious, and near unintelligible.

“You would have done the same, even though it resulted in the destruction of your entire team?”

Thrown, the courier cut his frantic rant short and deflated. Shoulders slumping as he lowered himself onto the berth.

Absurd, emotional Autobot. Struck mute by a mere question. How something so distracted by sentiment had managed to evade capture for so long, Shockwave did not know.

He allowed him to avoid this question, as he had lost interest in the subject. Now he knew what had happened, and who he could blame when Lord Megatron returns and inevitably rages over the half-incinerated mess that was Iacon currently.

Blandly, and without any further theatrics, Shockwave thrust the cube in front of the courier’s listless faceplate. “Fuel your creation, Autobot.”

He jumped, then snatched the cube so quick the scientist barely caught the movement with his optic. He moved a servo toward his subspace and gave Shockwave a tense glance. When the Decepticon gave no hint of being perturbed, as he knew that the courier had already been scanned for weapons and his only blaster had already been confiscated, he dug into his subspace and withdrew a nozzle capped bottle.

It was dented, and a slightly dirty, but it held energon without leaking when he guided the nozzle to his sparkling's intake. The sparkling -or Wheelie, as the courier had named him, which wasn't a very fitting designation for a Decepticon, and Shockwave would change it as soon the courier was disposed of- rejected the bottle and beeped; turning his helm away and rubbing his face against his carrier's abdominal plating.

"Wheelie." The courier hissed, sending Shockwave a nervous look. Wheelie continued to refuse the bottle. Shockwave startled when, rather than continue to try and persuade Wheelie, the racer popped the lid off the bottle and chugged the entire thing.

He thrust a finger out and snapped once he was finished drinking. "Wait-!"

Blue optics shuttered into narrow slits as if expecting Shockwave to reprimand him right away. The courier then hurriedly popped a panel on his side, fished out an energon line, and offered it to his sparkling who eagerly latched on.

It was... intriguing. Shockwave was old enough to remember a time before the war when frame-born sparklings and carriers had been a more common phenomenon. He had not seen such behavior -feeding another bot from one's own frame- for many millennia, and he wondered at the sight and the thought that such a young mechanism could know of such old practices. Though, where another bot might have felt nostalgic or uncomfortable about it, Shockwave's only thought was that a vivisection on the courier would be the first thing he would do once the opportunity presented itself.

The courier caught his stare and scowled.

"He's picky I can't help it if I could help it I would but I can't so-so-so mind your own business!" Slender servos cradled his sparkling's helm close while he curled into a protective ball.

Shockwave decided to ignore the flustered behavior and instead reached into his subspace to remove the recording device he'd brought. He turned it on and set it pointedly onto the berth. At its appearance, the courier's expression turned serious and he shifted to sit straighter, joints creaking as he met Shockwave's gaze head on. His optics were oddly steady, filled with futile resolve.

A deep vent and then, the courier started to speak.

Chapter End Notes

I always feel awkward abt OC's in my own stories, so all of the seekers are actual canon background G1 seekers. So sorry for any Nacelle or Blackout (the black seeker from chp 2) fans lol i'm just using them as filler characters.

next chapter might be out a little slower, i've like rewritten it a couple times already and i can't seem to make it how I want yet.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

omg this chapter fought me so hard. I have fun stuff planned for the next chapters so this one just dragged onnn.

Also I know I said this is a G1 au but I suck and I'm going to be cherry picking some things from IDW to help fill in the gaps lol. That being said, I will change up some things abt. Shockwave's backstory from IDW. Not too much, but I have some ideas for it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“If you are a true messenger,

Deliver and be coy no more.”

-Arabian Nights

Smoke clogged the sky; still filtering away the remnants of the explosion in Cybertron's thin atmosphere, trailing dark clouds and shadows across the planet's metal landscape. They had found a temporary shelter in a scorched husk of a building somewhere in Nova Cronum. It might have been a school, at one point in time, but now it sat disfigured and desolate in an empty city.

Greenlight paid no mind to the chill that set in whenever the black clouds shifted and blocked the light of their sun. She remained kneeling, spinal struts hunched and arms cinched close to her frame, her servos pressed to Lancer's feverishly hot cheeks.

Firestar murmured something beside her and she gently moved out of her way, careful not to jostle Lancer's helm on her thighs. Deft yellow fingers worked on Lancer's mangled chassis, and though Firestar had little medic training, she made quick work of the repairs. She'd assured Greenlight that the damage only appeared worse than it truly was. Lancer was a construction model; her armor was denser and sturdier than most other bots. She would be fine.

But she still had not woken.

Firestar couldn't explain it; there had been no damage to her helm. She thought that maybe Lancer was just rebooting slowly. Greenlight hoped that was the case.

She returned to her task of cradling Lancer's helm in her lap, gently tracing the ridges on her brow and the scuff marks on her audials, and thought of little else.

"Greenlight." Chromia's rough voice cut through her trance and she tensed. Beside her, Firestar finished her repairs and subspaced her medical kit.

"Greenlight." Chromia tried again, closer, her callused servo rested *almost* gently on Greenlight's arm. "I need you to work with us. Lancer will be fine for now; Firestar says she's stable."

"She still hasn't moved! She hasn't woken. I'm not leaving her- I won't!" Greenlight burst, shaking her arm from Chromia's grasp and turning to glare at her new leader. It was a mistake to turn- her optics caught on the prone form of Elita One nearby, and rested on the sight of a haggard looking Chromia.

"I know, but right now Wheelie, Blurr, and Moonracer need you. Neither me or Firestar are small or fast enough to scout out the base, and we need to find them before Shockwave or another seeker gets to them, but you--"

"I-" Greenlight cut her off, then faltered.

She couldn't leave Lancer, but the racers and Wheelie... Wheelie was just a sparkling, who knows how he could have been hurt, and Blurr and Moonracer were so young. The explosion had been so immense and...

Uncertain, Greenlight looked at Lancer. Unconsciously, her servos curled tighter into the grooves in Lancer's forearm. Clinging. A yellow servo smoothed over hers and pried her fingers away.

"We have her, Greenlight. We need you." Firestar pleaded. Greenlight hesitated for a long moment, optics glued to Lancer's face. Then she gently raised the other femme's helm from her lap and stood. Her servos clenched and unclenched, green plating shifting with irritation. Chromia and Firestar watched her walk to the edge of their makeshift camp, and she was glad that they did not speak. She didn't want them to console her further, or help her plan the course; she knew the way.

Though, she wasn't sure if their home still stood at the end of it.

She transformed, folding down into her light two-wheeled vehicle mode to speed off towards the blackened crater of Iacon. With the absence of both Blurr and Moonracer, she was now the fastest and most suited for reconnaissance out of all of them. It did not sit well with her.

It took her a while to get back into the city. The old freeway was tempting; the promise of a straight shot into Iacon with wide, comfortable roads almost got to her, but it was too exposed for her to travel on unnoticed. She'd had to take backroads which were now even more convoluted with toppled, ashen buildings and debris in her way. The ground was uneven;

pockmarked with smoldering craters and dips and holes. Unstable to drive on as she drew closer to their base, forcing her to transform to root mode and scramble the rest of the way on her pedes.

When she approached the last bit that separated her from where she knew her home should be, an enormous melted wall of metal -a result of two buildings that had collapsed on one another and then merged from the heat of the explosion- blocked her path and forced her to slow down. Just in time to catch the echoing roar of flight engines above her. She dove for cover, thigh plating skidding on the ground, to avoid a few of Shockwave's clunky flying sentinels as they passed by.

Her cover, however, was far from safe.

The ceiling of the curved sheet of metal she'd taken refuge under crumbled, and servo-sized chunks of metal rained directly onto Greenlight's frame. One clipped her on the side of her helm where her comm link was located. It crunched loudly. She collapsed from the impact and rolled out from under the cover, her servos wrapped uselessly around her ringing audials. She lied there for several long moments, a low whine of pain dragging itself from her vocalizer while her optics reset and her audials cycled on and off with loud, disorienting clicks.

Achingly, she forced herself to stand. Stumbling and disoriented, she made her way past the melted barrier between her and the base. Crawling through the wreckage until she found herself staring in horror and awe at what remained of their home.

Not a crater, not a canyon, but something overwhelmingly close in appearance to those things. Like a jagged scar that followed the path of where the electricity supply line had once been, their base had been caught in that rift and was rendered nothing more than a sparking mess of wires and jagged black steel.

Greenlight fell to her knees and stared.

She tried to activate her comm to ping a message out to one of her missing teammates, but it bounced back without sending, spurring up a cluster of error messages and system damage reports. Her commlink was broken. Chromia and Firestar were too far out of range to send an internal comm to Moonracer or Blurr. Greenlight was close but her commlink was *broken*. Primus. Her luck was practically in the pits.

Shaking off her shock, Greenlight rose to her pedes and stubbornly crawled down into the canyon.

She searched for joors. Sifted through rubble looking for a note, a sign, *anything*. As time wore by and her hope dwindled when she found nothing, she started looking for offline frames. She widened her search and combed through the outskirts of their base.

Something shimmered in the corner of her optics. She turned to track it to its source. Soot covered shards littered the ground, and she bent to pick up the largest one.

Greenlight's thumb swiped across the surface of the shard, smearing away soot to reveal a shade of green that was lighter and softer than her own plating. A shade she knew well.

She leaned against the closest solid wall, Moonracer's chest plate fragment held close to her frame. How could this happen? She couldn't even begin to think how. Nearby, she spotted something small and soft. When she went to hold it in her servos it crumbled to dust- but she knew what it had been. Wheelie's predacon doll, *always* kept clutched in his tiny servos.

For a long time she stood still. Looking at the shards on the ground.

Eventually she tucked the largest piece of Moonracer's armor into her subspace with care, and then searched for any sign of Blurr.

She came up with nothing. He could've been disintegrated fully? It would make sense; there wouldn't be a frame, or *pieces*, left to recover. But something about that didn't sit right with Greenlight. Blurr was fast. He could've outrun an explosion like this in a blink.

Rolling wheels rumbled in the distance, growing closer by the nano-sec. A solemn air came over her. She needed to get out of there before Shockwave's drones appeared to comb the place over. Though, if she left, there would be no way to return. It would mean certain capture and death.

If she stayed to continue to look for Blurr, it would also mean capture.

Unless he had been incapacitated, it was likely Blurr was out there, somewhere.

If she stayed to look for him, she wouldn't be able to return to Lancer.

Shame curled like mist under her plating, itching and promising rust, when she crawled from the ruins of their base and set out for Nova Cronum.

--

Shockwave did not feel emotion.

That wasn't to say that he was incapable of *having* emotions; he probably had emotional reactions to things all the time. His spark spinning in anger, lurching with excitement, or thrumming in idle pleasure at any moment during his long and endless days. He just didn't react to them, or even register them inside his processor. The reason behind this disconnect between processor and spark lied in his most useful invention: his emotion suppressing protocols.

A complex, laborious line of coding that he'd developed and implemented on himself, designed to block the connection between his spark and the part of his processor that received signals from his spark and interpreted them as emotions. It worked with 98.67% efficiency, more than adequate considering how long ago he had created the code. It did not manage to cut off some stronger feelings, such as curiosity, but then again, curiosity -especially when it

was aimed in the pursuit of scientific discovery- had always been an integral part of Shockwave's character. A difficult thing to completely amputate from one's mind.

Why was a question he was often asked in regards to it. Why would he do such a thing? Of course, there was a reason why he had severed himself from his emotions: to better pursue an existence ruled entirely by logic. Logic was a reasonable and effective road to follow in life.

It made sense. It was stable. And It was... truthfully, not the entire reason behind his choice to purge his emotions.

The other reason was now a memory he thought back on and regarded only as a neutral *fact*, without any of the emotional turmoil it should have incurred. Exactly as he had wanted it to be when he had made the code. He did not intend to feel anything like *that* again.

This being said, Shockwave had the recurring thought that his spark was most likely feeling concern at the moment.

Cybertron was dying.

Of course, it had been visibly dying for thousands of kilocycles, but now it seemed to be entering its very last death throes. Shockwave did not feel worry about it, but he did spend many joors mulling over it.

He was at a loss on how to revive their home world. Shockwave was never at a loss for anything.

Cybertron mainly ran on energon, but now it had run dry. There were other forms of energy to be found naturally that could be converted into energon. Take, for instance, the large electrical supply lines that ran throughout the planet like neural pathways, originally intended as a form of non-essential power supply, but now were sapped from to sustain his laboratory. Or the meager light from their dying red sun, whose solar power Shockwave utilized whenever he needed to cut down on energon usage. There was also the possibility of draining energy and resources from other worlds, but Shockwave had not the firepower nor the ships to take on such an ambitious task. Not to mention, transplanting more fuel to their planet wouldn't cure it.

The core of their world was rotting. Fading away as its body crumbled and greyed and its inhabitants slaughtered each other to extinction. Shockwave had some ideas on alternative power sources, but according to his calculations, none would be powerful enough to rejuvenate the core before it could deteriorate further. Already, it was barren- hotspots and the Well had gone dark just after the start of the war. Though, it was fortunate that their race had multiple methods of creation to fall back upon, so he could turn his attention to creating a viable planet rather than focusing on the issue of *repopulation*.

As if summoned by his thoughts, an alarm pinged on his HUD, reminding him to visit his captive Autobot.

Shockwave moved away from his main lab table, temporarily shutting down the more hazardous experiments he'd been running. In the corner of his laboratory, he'd set up an area

specifically for this meeting. He made some last-minute adjustments to the space before he sent out a command for his drones to escort the courier to *him* this time. It had become unreasonable to visit the courier each cycle, a waste of time for him to abandon his work for, when it made more sense for his captive to be brought to him instead. Especially as it seemed the clever little Autobot was drawing his information out- stalling for time over the past quartex.

Shockwave was not unobservant. He knew when he was being played. He allowed it thus far because every cycle the courier lived; his information proved invaluable. Even if he did conveniently end every morning without finishing whatever file he'd been recording, so that Shockwave would have to keep him alive for yet another cycle if he wanted the rest of the information.

Clunky stomps echoed from the doorway, caused by the more inelegant drone models that Shockwave kept around for security, heralding the arrival of his captives. The Autobot appeared at the entrance and was shoved in unceremoniously. He opened his intake with the highly likely intention of complaining but was fortunately silenced at the sight of the room.

He lingered, uncharacteristically hesitant and quiet, on the outskirts of Shockwave's laboratory.

Blue optics shifted. Bouncing around the various tubes and machinery slotted neatly about the space, stuttering anxiously on dismantled frames and vials of energon.

"Come, Autobot." At the sound of his voice, the courier turned to see Shockwave gesturing to a chair. His thin plating visibly relaxed at the sight and he zipped to the chair so fast, if Shockwave had the ability to blink, he would've missed it.

Pedes tapped the ground restlessly, and the courier's narrow face frowned up at Shockwave.

"I do have a name you know and it's not Courier-or-Autobot-or-whatever-else-you-can-come-up-with, in fact, I think it's so rude that you don't even bother to find out my designation well I-can't-take-it anymore so I'll just let you know-" The courier wagged a grimy finger at Shockwave's optic. He had quite the audacity lately. "-The name's *Blurr*, though I wouldn't expect you to remember that since you're so-"

"-Enough. Your prattle is irrelevant."

Shockwave fiddled with the controls on his console to activate the recording program while Blurr muttered to himself, sulking and swinging his legs around jitterily.

Wheelie peeked out from the sling fastened to Blurr's windshield. The sparkling blinked, observing his new surroundings until he caught sight of Shockwave. Surprised, he stared at the Decepticon's face-less purple helm for a long time, absently mouthing at one servo while the other flapped in the scientist's direction.

Shockwave stared back.

Slowly, as to not startle, Shockwave approached and held out his servo.

“I will take the sparkling for now.”

Blurr, predictably, scowled at him and flinched away, half jumping onto the chair to try and scoot further back.

“What?” He cried. “No way-no-way-no-way am I doing that! What do you even want with him anyway huh he’s-perfectly-fine-right-here-” Wheelie let out a cry at the feeling of his carrier’s more agitated than usual EM field. The cry built into a full wail and inconsolable sobbing, vocalizer clicking while he struggled to reach a higher decibel.

Blurr grew frantic as he searched for a way to calm his sparkling.

Perhaps more frantic than the situation called for, Shockwave thought. Charge visibly sparked at his transformation seams and danced across his dirty blue plating. He noted the reaction and saved his observations of it for future study. Another oddity for him to investigate once he had free reign to dissect the Autobot.

“Your sparkling is acting out because he requires regular exercise and mental enrichment.”

Blurr snapped to look at him.

“Mental-enrichment!” Blurr scoffed, his vocalizer pitched to an unpleasant nasal tone. “He gets plenty of that with me I know what I’m doing thank-you-very-much I don’t need you to tell me how to-”

“You’re incorrect. You may be able to entertain him inside your cell, but it is a poor substitute for the type of exercise that his developing processor and frame requires.”

In order to avoid more rebuttals, Shockwave ushered Blurr out of the chair with a servo placed on the back of the Autobot’s waist, leading him towards the corner he had prepared earlier. Of course, his effort was in vain; the Autobot’s engine squealed and he smacked Shockwave’s servo away, his face glowing hotly. Though he still followed Shockwave, and he argued loudly while he was led deeper into the lab.

“-dare you tell me I can’t take care of Wheelie- you think you’re so-so-so-so smart huh I bet you do well I-I-” Blurr stuttered as he took in the corner. “-What is that- did you make that- is it for Wheelie- what-is-it?”

The corner had been sectioned off with a solid low wall, barely high enough to reach the Autobot’s knee joints. Inside the space, the ground and walls were lightly padded and littered with objects; interactive puzzles, small obstacles, and a caretaker drone model.

Shockwave did not care for toys or inane coddling, but it was logical to encourage learning from a young age with sparklings. Most of what he had assembled here would have been common and available items for bots to purchase during the Golden Age, but such things were lost over the cycles of war, and so Shockwave had to recreate as much as he could. It was preferable that he made everything himself anyway; the puzzles he had designed would improve optic-servo coordination as well as help develop problem solving subroutines, and

the drone was snipped down into an efficient caretaker, equipped with learning modules and sparkling care and safety programs.

Patiently, Shockwave explained this to Blurr. When he finished, he held out his servo once again.

Blurr's optics flicked back and forth between Shockwave's servo and the drone. His intake opened as if to argue further but it snapped shut as he continued to stare at the play area.

With visibly shaking arms, Blurr placed Wheelie into Shockwave's grasp.

The sparkling was small enough to fit in Shockwave's one servo. His miniscule orange frame rattled from the force of his cries which soon died down when he realized he was being held by an unfamiliar bot. To better brace the sparkling he carried, Shockwave curled his arm inward and let Wheelie rest against the large expanse of his chassis. His movements were careful and deliberately slow, not as a result of any creator-like sentiment on his part, but rather out of sense of practicality.

He gentled his touch because it was *logical* to be gentle.

That was all there was to the interaction. At least, until he approached the play area wall.

Wheelie, having grown comfortable and curious, started to writhe and wiggle onto the top of Shockwave's chest. His servos patted their way across the war-frame's denser plating and picked at millennia-old scratches and dents. Shockwave ignored it. It was inconsequential and harmless.

A soft touch, just barely felt, to the side of Shockwave's helm made every strut in his frame seize up. He froze. Long enough to be noticeable as his measured steps faltered and little servos grew bold enough to press against the black expanse of metal where his intake would have been. *Should* have been. A wave of something he could not parse crashed through his processor; alien and overwhelming and tailed by error messages and warnings. It choked him. It made no sense- it had no meaning to him. It was not rational and thus could only be a result of a fault in his emotion suppressing protocols.

As swiftly as the wave came, it subsided. Beaten down when his experimental coding adjusted and started rooting the emotion out of his processor. All that remained when he recovered was his still frame, clear mind, and small servos plucking softly at the bolts beside his left finial.

Unwilling to risk another episode, Shockwave swept Wheelie from his chest and placed him onto the ground inside the play enclosure.

It did not take long for the sparkling to start to explore his surroundings. Shockwave watched critically while Wheelie approached different puzzles, and he made plans for adjustments and improvements based on what he saw. He expected Blurr to be watching his sparkling just as closely. He expected to have to drag the carrier away from his sparkling based off of his earlier over-protective behavior, but when Shockwave turned, he found Blurr's attention was focused on *him*.

Sharp and calculating, laced with an emotion Shockwave could not identify, those blue optics threw his systems into another loop as he adjusted to Blurr's unpredictable behavior.

He collected himself and gestured back to his main console.

"Come, Courier." Shockwave repeated. Blurr rolled his optics at the name, blue lights spinning in his helm with exasperation. "You have much to reveal."

--

Chromia held the shard of Moonracer's armor with stony resignation.

"And you found all three of their remains?" She asked, voice slow and coarse.

"Yes." Greenlight replied steadily. Her right servo twitched twice. "I found all three of them- I was only able to grab Moonracer's armor before Shockwave's drones showed up. Chromia..."

Greenlight paused, her vocalizer burst with genuinely upset static. "Our base is melted to slag. There's *nothing* left. I'm surprised I was even able to find them. What are we going to do? Where are we going to go?"

Chromia was silent for a long moment. She was sitting against a wall with Elita's limp frame propped up against her side. Their leader's pink helm rested on a blue shoulder pauldron where it had fallen after Chromia had hand-fueled her stasis locked frame. The SIC gripped Elita's unresponsive servo in one servo and in the other she cradled Moonracer's armor. Her normally impassive face looked close to breaking, despair inking up behind her white plating, but she reigned it back in. Her brow ridges knitted together, making her look older when she gathered herself.

"Before Elita went into stasis, she gave me the coordinates to Alpha Trion. He knows how to fix her." Chromia let go of Elita and pulled out a compact holographic GPS and booted it up. A set of coordinates was already input. "He's hidden down past Kaon, closer to Helex and deep into the southernmost end of Cybertron. Starting from Nova Cronum; It'll take quartexes for us to get there. Firestar took a look at Elita and she says she should be able to hold out long enough for us to get there, but it'll be cutting it close. Her spark is barely burning."

Greenlight pursed her lips and nodded once. The wiring at the base of her helm ached from how it clenched with stress. "We have to try. I don't want to lose anyone else."

"Yes." Chromia grimaced and rubbed a callused thumb over Moonracer's armor. "No one else."

She held the shard up, offering it back. Greenlight took it, and it felt like it weighed ten times more than it should have inside her subspace.

“Greenlight!” Both femmes whipped their helms around to see Firestar approaching. “She’s waking!”

Greenlight looked to Chromia.

“You’re dismissed.” Chromia braced an arm around Elita's waist and jerked her chin guard in Firestar’s direction. “Go to her.”

She wasted no time sprinting off. Firestar met her halfway and led her deeper into the abandoned school until they came upon the room where Lancer was laid out.

“It looks like she was stuck in a prolonged reboot. She’ll be fine now, but waking might be rough.” Firestar explained while Greenlight rushed to Lancer, servos petting along the sides of her orange helm as she whined. Her optics flickered. Struggling to focus as she clawed her way to consciousness.

“Moony?” She groaned; voice hesitant.

“No-” Greenlight snapped, and then, in a softer tone. “No. It’s me. It’s-”

“*Greenlight.*” Lancer sighed, and her whole frame went lax, helm tilting so that she could press her face plates into the green Autobot’s palm. Greenlight all-but melted with relief. She leaned forward on her knees and elbow-joints and rubbed her nasal ridge against her cheek. A grateful smile on her lips that was quickly captured in a kiss.

“But-” Lancer blinked, confused once they separated. “Where is Moonracer? She was here. I swear- I swear I was jus’ talking to her?”

Greenlight tensed. Plating clamping down. She hesitated for a long moment, fighting with herself, before she explained what happened. Lancer didn’t take it well.

“No,” She moaned, EM field crashing out like a hammer, thick with grief. “All of them? All-?”

“Yes.” Greenlight whispered, the lie cutting her glossa. Lancer was so much softer than the rest of them. She cared so openly and so deeply. “All three- I’m sorry Lancer.”

It took a long time for her to calm down. Once she had, Greenlight explained the rest of the situation to her.

“We have to leave soon. Alpha Trion knows how to fix Elita One; he can help us.”

“It looks like everything is healing well, too. We should be good to go.” Firestar added. She had left to give them privacy but returned awhile later to check on Lancer.

Lancer did not reply. Her helm hung low on her shoulders. She gave a weak nod and stumbled to her pedes. Greenlight helped keep her steady.

It only took about a joor to pack and load up onto the back of Firestar's alt mode. Lancer and Elita One were carefully laid onto her truck bed while Chromia and Greenlight perched

cautiously next to them, weapons ready and attentions half focused on the skies. Greenlight kept her back to Iacon at all times.

She couldn't look back.

“Alright.” Chromia sighed and loaded her blaster. “Let's roll out.”

Chapter End Notes

in a weird way i think Shockwave would be like. a good dad. because logic. baby needs a diaper change? Uhm duh Shockwave's gonna change it 😬 he knows how to take care of things. like he literally runs a planet for millions of yrs. and he clones things (those are kinda like kids ig?). he's got this downn. Also i'm kind of drunk and spit out like 3 pages so I apologise for any errors !!

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

"Blurr's engine nearly revved with anticipation. He wanted to know- who would flinch first.

Obviously it wasn't going to be Blurr. He never lost a game of robo-chicken."

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Can you run? I think not... I think not."

-Watership Down

"You are damaging the floor. Cease."

Shockwave's raspy voice cut through his anxious haze. A heavy servo rested on his knee joint and stilled his bouncing leg. The touch sent shocks and tingles through Blurr's thigh wiring.

He paused his monologue for a moment, halting the steady flow of top secret Autobot information to look down. Sure enough, there were scrapes in the purple metal below his chair. Blurr shuffled his pedes in embarrassment. It was the wrong reaction to have because Shockwave's servo tightened to counteract the movement. His large fingers, metal weathered from time and work, curled around Blurr's calf plating and *pressed* with a strength that was completely unsurmountable, forcibly planting Blurr's pede flat on the ground.

Blurr had to override the whine that threatened to leak from his engine.

His oversized spark lurched in its chamber; swelling against its confines while excess charge shivered under his armor. He held as still as possible. Shockwave watched him for a long moment. His yellow optic was utterly emotionless.

Once assured that Blurr was going to stay still he released the leg and pressed the button to resume recording on his console. Blurr leapt back into relaying the files, taking care to keep his frame motionless.

Satisfied, Shockwave returned to tinkering with some machinery on his table.

As his intake moved a mile a klik, on autopilot while it relayed some random folder on ancient Autobot artefacts, Blurr seethed.

He wanted to run. His frame was aching- it was hard to disperse the charge that kept building as a result of his confinement. The majority of his cycles were spent inside his cell, pacing to get in some movement or taking care of Wheelie, while the rest were wasted sitting still in Shockwave's lab, spilling secrets and generally regretting his existence. It was infinitely worse than being under lockdown at the Autobot base.

Blurr's thoughts wandered. He thought of running; of the ground beneath his pedes, wind against his audials and smoothing over his cheeks, of the thrill of outpacing another bot - Autobot or Decepticon- and the rush of winning a race. He wanted that freedom. He wanted the open road beneath him. He wanted the awed looks from spectators when they witnessed his speed. He wanted the burn of his fuel lines and the ache in his struts. He *wanted*-

-His gaze caught on the strong expanse of Shockwave's shoulders, on thick purple fingers expertly manipulating metal and wiring while he worked-

'No-no-no-no-no-way-' Blurr physically jerked himself out of his thoughts, frame jumping in his seat with a loud clang.

Shockwave turned to him again, a feeling of *almost* annoyance in his flat EM field.

"It seems that is as much as I will get from you this cycle." Square finials drooped before stiffening into their usual neutral. He set his project aside. "L-"

"-Great-great-great! Does that mean I can go get Wheelie now please-please-please-can I go get Wheelie now I think that means I can go get him I'll just go right now!" Blurr burst, running a few impatient circles around the Decepticon and then sprinting off into the gloomy depths of his lab. Wheelie greeted him with two rhyme-like chirps from inside his play pen (A play pen! What a surprise that had been a real shock a nerve-wracking-ridiculous-experience for sure) and held up a colorful metal block, its four sides engraved with Cybertronian letters, for Blurr to see.

"Oh wow how cool Wheelie so-so-so-cool why don't you come over here and show me up close-" He leaned over the divider and made grabbing motions with his servos. Usually Wheelie got the hint and would crawl over whenever he came to get him after his sessions with Shockwave.

Wheelie watched Blurr call for him. "Come on Wheelie come-on that's it come to Blurr you got it-"

The sparkling smiled, optics shining, and rolled on his aft in the opposite direction.

He laughed, peals of the mocking sound while he crawled away to another puzzle. He started gnawing on it -definitely not how it was intended to be used- and ignored Blurr's presence.

Blurr gawked. Optics resetting rapidly. Wheelie had never ignored him before!

Well. Okay-okay. He had never ignored him in *Shockwave's lab*, at least.

Throwing a leg over the pen wall and preparing to snatch his sparkling, Blurr let out a petulant whine. "Oh you never listen *Wheelie-*"

A thudding noise sounded from behind Blurr. Wheelie turned his helm to see what it was and squealed, arms flapping up and down as if his frame couldn't contain the amount of excitement he felt.

Having followed at a more sedate pace -because he was clunky and slow and built like an oversized battery block, Blurr pettily thought- Shockwave came up behind the racer and leaned over the divider.

He didn't even have to say anything, Blurr noticed with rising jealousy. All he had to do was wait while Wheelie used his newly-activated ability to partially transform and roll on his knee and elbow wheels to throw himself at him. The little traitor practically melted as he nuzzled his protoform cheeks and nasal ridge against Shockwave's neck cabling, binary beeps and whistles escaping his vocalizer. His grimy orange plating was a funny contrast to the Decepticon's subdued purple frame.

It was odd to see a *Decepticon* holding a sparkling.

Shockwave, Blurr noted shrewdly, took care to keep the sparkling from touching his helm. Redirecting Wheelie whenever he drew too close. Blurr had not forgotten the his strange episode earlier in the deca-cycle when he'd first held Wheelie. For some reason Blurr could not figure out, he was uncomfortable with his helm being touched. Maybe it had something to do with his odd lack of face? Or perhaps he simply didn't want dirty little sparkling servos all over his helm.

Whatever-it-was, it could be an exploitable weakness.

He followed Shockwave out of the lab without fuss, making silly faces at his disloyal sparkling from behind the Shockwave's back while security drones closed in around them. Wheelie smiled from his place propped on Shockwave's chest, and a glob of lubricant drooled from the sparkling's intake and made itself at home on a purple shoulder pauldron. Shockwave didn't seem to notice it. Blurr certainly wasn't going to tell him.

Wheelie smeared it around with a servo; making a disgusting mess.

The group passed by a long window, and Blurr bounced on his pedes to look over the drones that surrounded him and catch a glimpse of the outside world.

Construction drones swarmed a site below the Decepticon tower; swaddling new scaffolding and working in a frenzy. Blurr opticked the activity with suspicion.

"That's new that's surprising what's it supposed to be I-can't-tell-from-here- are you building a satellite tower it looks like one I bet it is one-" The roughly outlined building was odd; long

and thin with a flared out top.

“It is not for you to know.”

A drone nudged his back plating with a blaster, and Blurr hastily shut himself up.

The journey back to the cell block was not a long one, much to Blurr’s disappointment. It was surprising that Shockwave had accompanied them all the way down here. Usually, he did not deign to leave his lab after their meetings. It was one thing Blurr had come to realize about Shockwave: he was a homebody. He seemed to prefer (how he could prefer it, Blurr would never understand) to stay in one place. And not just that- he ran his entire life on a schedule. He was neat, orderly, and efficient. Diligent in his every task and methodical with his every movement. Nothing he did was spontaneous or unplanned.

It was driving Blurr insane.

But this seemingly impromptu walk of his was a welcome change to the monotony that had become the racer’s life.

Begrudgingly, the racer stepped into his cell first once they arrived, and tensed when Shockwave followed in behind him. Blurr watched him closely. If he thought Shockwave was capable of the emotion, he would say the larger bot seemed hesitant. As it was, he paused just inside the entrance, servo hovering indecisively over Wheelie’s backplates while the sparkling cooed at him. Peeking from under the bill on his tiny helm to watch the larger mech with open fascination.

Shockwave's single optic dimmed.

He moved, scooping Wheelie up, the motion impossibly careful when he offered the sparkling back. Blurr snatched his sparkling in a nano-sec, moving in close in order to reach. Excess charge sparked from his dirty blue plating and leapt into the air, nipping at Shockwave's arms like static. Shockwave did not flinch at the sensation but he did shift once in discomfort.

A crazy idea -a theory to test out- emerged in Blurr’s processor when he witnessed the reaction.

Starved enough of mental stimulation to do it; he did not retreat from Shockwave’s personal space once Wheelie was in his arms. Instead, he inched closer. The other bot’s EM field was like a lead blanket over his frame, slowing his movements ever-so-slightly while he raised his unoccupied arm. It was an awkward angle –Shockwave was *tall*- but Blurr’s servo reached up, aimed straight for the purple mech's helm in a mini game of robo-chicken. He made sure - absolutely-positively-definitely sure- that he moved as slow as he was able. Blatantly broadcasting that he was moving in to touch his helm and giving him time to back out.

It was quiet. The gentle hum of their internal machinery felt muted from the tension.

Old gears creaked in Shockwave’s frame as he cinched up, refusing to back away. Blurr’s engine nearly revved with anticipation. He wanted to know- who would flinch first.

Obviously it wasn't going to be Blurr. He never lost a game of robo-chicken.

Shockwave's frame jerked back just before Blurr could touch him, a strange mishmash of movement that looked like he was trying to lean closer and further away at the same time. Smoothly, Blurr swerved his servo to the side and tapped a finger to the mess of lubricant on Shockwave's broad shoulder as if that had been his target the entire time.

"Wheelie made a mess here you should really clean that before it congeals and gets all gummy and stuck in your seams- and once it gets in there it won't come out you-know you-know."

That yellow optic was on him as he retreated to the berth. Purple helm turning while it followed his steps.

"Ah." Shockwave said in reply, voice completely flat. He rolled his shoulder gears and-
-and left without further comment.

--

"-Item: File-306-Title: Early-Ark-Spacecraft-Development..." Blurr's unpleasant nasal voice was white noise in the background, mundane and easy to ignore.

Hunched over a chunk of machinery that was usually one of the many holographic projectors kept positioned around the planet for security purposes, but now was simply a difficult piece of inoperable hardware, Shockwave kept an outward appearance of being hard at work. Truthfully, his thoughts were on other, more unproductive things.

Unproductive things such as the courier seated five feet away from his frame.

He was becoming a concern. Shockwave had begun experiencing... *malfunctions* ever since the unpredictable bot had been brought into his custody. It was disorienting, and recovering from episodes of strange behavior and processor crashes wasted valuable time and lowered his productivity. Shockwave had plans. Many plans and projects despite the dire state of their planet and disappearance of 99 % of the Decepticon forces. He could not waste time and resources because he was rendered nonfunctional as a result of something as trivial as emotional outbursts. If Blurr continued to function for more than a stellar cycle, Shockwave predicted his plans' success rates would drop by 45 %.

This could not be.

But how to dispose of him? He still needed the Alpha Trion files, and the courier was in no rush to supply them. He was very seriously contemplating prying open the courier's helm to access his databanks, despite warnings of self-destruction protocols...

Shockwave's helm turned, unbidden, to the left.

Restless servos danced across grimy blue thighs, fingers tapping odd rhythms into the metal. Blurr's frame was satisfactorily designed, even by Shockwave's standards. Aerodynamic technology pushed to its limit; sleek curves and sharp edges that were as optic-catching as they were practical.

Warnings popped up across his HUD. Shockwave looked away.

Attempting to salvage what little time remained of the night-cycle, he shifted focus and set aside the hologram projector. Instead, he went to his console and sat down, intending to work on setting up a longer-range comms system. He got no longer than a joor of work done before he felt an erratic EM field at his back. The room had gone quiet.

"Is-that-a long-distance-comms-system-" Excess charge prickled across his arm as the courier invaded his space to lean over his lap and get a better look at the screen. "It looks like scrap! What are you even doing that is not-how-it's-supposed-to-be-done- you know what-" He wrestled Shockwave's huge servo out of the way and let his fingers fly across the keyboard.

It was if his mind was spilt in two against his will: one half was a glitching mess of error messages and a strange hyper awareness of the warm frame pressed close to his, and the other half was trying to restore himself back to a rational, neutral baseline and apprehend the Autobot before he damaged or sabotaged anything. By the time he regained control of himself, Blurr had already finished his task, resting his servos on his hip plating and rocking back on his heels. A satisfied smirk tugged at the edge of his white lips.

"Your assistance is unnecessary-" He paused when he read the code Blurr had input.

"What." Was all he could exclaim, surprise leaking through his protocols. Blurr's frame visibly blurred at the edges. Smug satisfaction saturated his EM field.

"Oh this-? It's nothing. Nothing-at-all you know it's nothing except it's the actual way you're supposed to set up a comms system of that kind of size and not whatever it was you were stumbling through for a whole joor you know it really was painful to watch all that you really should-"

Shockwave needed to silence him before he devolved into spouting any more rapid self-congratulatory nonsense. "And where did you learn this? I've not seen coding of this nature before."

Oddly, Blurr flushed. Energon rose to pool and shine beneath his grime-streaked facial plating.

"Well- I'm a courier but when there's no messages to send then there's no job for me to do and when there's no job for me to do I-get-restless so either Ultra Magnus or Elita One would have me work with the communication officers-" He started shifting from pede to pede, bouncing in place with excess energy. "-And when I worked with them I learned a whole lot of things and then I started messing around with the code and-"

"You created this?"

“-Yes-yes-yes that’s what I just said it’s what I’m trying to explain if you hadn’t interrupted me-”

“It is remarkably efficient.”

“It’s what-*Erf!*” Blurr’s vocalizer popped with a strangled burst of static as he tripped on his own restless pedes and tumbled over, directly onto Shockwave.

By instinct Shockwave's servo and gun-arm raised to halt the other’s fall, but his movements were too slow and Blurr crashed roughly into his chassis. His arms only served to crush the smaller bot closer.

A groan, raspingly coarse and breathless, forced its way out of Shockwave when the courier’s helm knocked against his at an angle that brushed their sensory appendages together; distinctive blue crest and one of his square finials making contact. The rush of tactile data between them sent heat through his every circuit.

In his arms Blurr stiffened, then shivered at the sound.

He could acutely feel every flex and rattle caused by that singular shiver as it traveled through Blurr’s frame- a warm line of motion, and the alien feeling of light, malleable, non-warframe metal against his own plating.

“I-I-I-” Blurr looped. He jerked back, optics wide. They were a pleasant sight up close. Hundreds of miniscule fluorescent blue lights twitching back and forth inside elliptical optical shutters. Excess electric charge thrummed beneath thin armor, occasionally dipping out from Blurr’s seams to sting Shockwave's frame.

Shockwave's servo unconsciously flexed in its place fixed to the back of his thigh.

The sensation of non-violent touch, after so many vorns without, left the Decepticon reeling. With such a sleek frame pressed seamlessly to his-

BZZZZ

An orange light flashed from the lab entrance. The weight in his lap vanished.

BZZZZ-BZZZZ

Shockwave released the lock on the door and Nacelle stormed inside.

Wings flicked out, sending roiling drops of acid -not strong enough to kill but certainly strong enough to melt paint- across the room. Nacelle hissed and opened his intake, but stopped as his attention caught on Blurr hovering just to the left of Shockwave’s frame.

He looked back and forth between the two. A smirk slipped its way across his slightly melted facial plating.

“Sir-” He purred, advancing forward. “If I’d known that you had company, I might feel less annoyed that you *forgot* our meeting.”

Shockwave startled, internally.

A quick glance to the schedule on his HUD and, yes, he had forgotten that Nacelle was returning from his patrol today.

Nacelle prowled tight circles around Blurr, sizing up the frozen Autobot.

“Getting distracted lately, sir?” Nacelle taunted. “I can see why. You know, if I had a pretty Autobot all to myself, I would also forget that I locked the only other living mech on the planet outside. During an *acid storm*.”

As usual, the taunts did nothing to phase Shockwave. And the acid storm was only a level 3 on the acidity scale. Completely survivable for the average warframe. But-

But. Something was wrong. Blurr had gone still. After spending two quartexes with the mech, he knew *stillness* was not normal behavior for him. His EM field was held taut and pulled in close to his frame. The illogically pleasing sight of his energon-flushed plating was gone; he was grey-faced and serious, lips pressed into a line.

Nacelle seemed intent on Blurr, his attention not wavering for a moment. He leaned in close, red wings spread intimidatingly wide, and hissed something undoubtedly inflammatory into Blurr’s audial.

Shockwave intervened before the inevitable fight broke out and snagged Blurr by the waist, his light frame weighed virtually nothing but the momentum behind his lunges made him somewhat difficult to restrain.

“-you-hear-me-I’ll-rip-your-stupid-stupid-ugly-overgrown-wings-off don’t *ever* mention Elita One like-”

Nacelle stepped back, smug, as Blurr threw haphazard punches from around Shockwave’s much larger frame, kicking and babbling nonsense. “Is something wrong with his timing program? I can’t understand a *word*” Blurr launched into another tirade at the goading.

Truthfully, Shockwave did not understand -nor appreciate- the emotional display but it was far easier to restrain an enraged racer than it was an enraged seeker. Nacelle was amused for now, but Shockwave knew he possessed violent tendencies and he needed Blurr functional, not torn to shreds.

“You are dismissed.” Shockwave inserted himself into the space between Nacelle and the courier, his servo gripping Blurr’s arm. When he was ignored, he gave the racer a firm shake. “You are dismissed.” He subtly inclined his helm into the direction of where the sparkling enclosure was in the lab, fortunately out of sight of the meddlesome seeker. “Return to your duties.”

Blurr blinked up at him blankly for a moment, frame uncomfortably plastered to his. Hot gusts of air caressed Shockwave’s frame as the blue bot’s cooling fans roared. His white face plates went through many expressions before understanding dawned. His optics darted to

Nacelle suspiciously before he nodded several times in rapid succession and obediently sprinted off into the bowels of the laboratory.

Shockwave could not determine why his neck cabling relaxed once the courier was safely relocated.

“Duties? You’re recruiting Autobots now?” Nacelle snarked, flicking his chipped red wings in irritation. He flung himself into an unoccupied seat, legs draped over the armrest, and scowled. His red optics were still focused on the spot where Blurr had disappeared.

“They have their uses. It would be illogical to squander a resource.” Shockwave drawled blandly. For now, he wanted Wheelie’s existence and Blurr’s usefulness withheld from Nacelle. He was not a trustworthy mech. And, Shockwave did not see the logic in distracting him from his own tasks.

Nacelle took the comment with only a sarcastically muttered “*Illogical.*” and then moved on to give his verbal report. Shockwave listened with a patient audial, a recording program caught the report for him to analyze further at a later time while he crafted a new patrol route for the seeker.

Cybertron was in a very delicate state, and Shockwave managed the planet’s security to smallest micrometer. It’s state of abandonment left it vulnerable to attack and takeover and with no inhabitants left to defend it, many alien races would no-doubt come sniffing and rifling through the wreckage. *Would.* They *would* have come sniffing, if Shockwave had not utilized his holographic projectors to give Cybertron the outward appearance it had during the Golden Age; gleaming, healthy, and most importantly, heavily populated. This veneer of life, visible only to outsiders looking down at the planet, paired with numerous solar-powered defense systems, had kept alien intruders at bay over the past one million kilocycles.

Shockwave intended to keep it that way. “Sector fourteen’s hologram projector was damaged in a minor asteroid storm several cycles ago.” He gestured with his gun toward the mangled mound of metal on his lab table. Nacelle turned his nasal ridge up at the meagre progress that had been made toward its repair. “Your new route is heavily focused on that area. Despite sector fourteen being relatively small, I trust I do not need to remind you that any breach in our atmosphere is a grave security risk.” He turned his helm to stare pointedly down at the red seeker.

Nacelle picked at his melted fingers; metal joints clicked loudly. “Mhm. Heard you the first million times. *Sir.*”

He downloaded the patrol route onto a datachip and placed it in front of the seeker. Shockwave had no time for insolent behavior and it would be best to have the seeker vacate his lab as swiftly as possible.

“Your allocated rations have also been updated to match your recent performance.” Nacelle perked up, snatching the datachip with renewed vigor. He looked as though he wanted to say something more, but Shockwave turned back to his lab table in clear dismissal before he could start.

Not long after the seeker departed, the animated beeping of an excited sparkling made itself known to Shockwave's audials. He looked away from his work and was unsurprised to find that the courier had crept out from a hiding spot behind one of the larger machinery projects. Blurr froze like a petro-rabbit in headlights when their gazes locked, his shapely legs halting mid-motion and catching the lab's dim blue lighting. He nearly looked clean in the half-light, angular helm tilted in a way that accentuated the somewhat unique shape of his crest.

Shockwave could not look away. It was as though the command to move his helm was intercepted before it could travel across his synaptic wiring. His servo flexed once.

As an air of tension held both bots still, Shockwave felt something like an *urge* rise in his wiring and linger in his processor. Which was impossible- urges were spurred by emotions and he was incapable of such things. But the foreign desire grew more pronounced as the moment stretched and he felt compelled to make some sort of action- but what?

Before he could make any move the door to his lab hissed open, revealing several drones lined up and waiting. They were on schedule, he realized, and waiting to escort Blurr to his cell.

Blurr sprinted into their midst in his usual frantic stride and without pause the door slid shut, leaving Shockwave sitting -servo twitching at his side- alone in his lab.

--

“Reduced rations?!”

Nacelle kicked a dented mound of what had once been a chair across a street and watched as it crashed satisfyingly into a window. His optics narrowed on Shockwave's tower.

Shockwave's tower, that Nacelle was once again locked out of because the paranoid old drone thought he'd break things if he was given free rein. All he had access to was a fueling station at the base of the building.

And that wasn't even of any use! *'Reduced rations by 5.07% due to incomplete report.'* Nacelle reread the comment that had been included on the datachip several times, his frustration mounting as the words blurred on the screen.

Sure, it was somewhat warranted. But slag it all, Nacelle had been hoping Shockwave wouldn't notice that he'd skipped patrolling Nova Cronum. He was just one seeker! How was he supposed to patrol an entire hemisphere alone? He should get a little lenience, a little room for error, right?

Whatever. He flicked a wing dismissively, his anger rapidly cooling as he eyed a few fat acid storm clouds still lingering on the horizon.

After he chugged down a cube of energon and stuffed several cubes into his subspace for later, he leapt into the air and transformed, reluctantly beginning his new patrol route.

Chapter End Notes

My fav headcanon is that shockwave doesn't get laid often 😞

This chapter was actually supposed to be longer, but i split it in two because i kind of liked where it left off.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You can use logic to justify almost anything. That’s its power. And its flaw.”

-Star Trek

Hot, muggy air hung oppressively over the loading docks and clouded the glass on Blurr’s chassis as he shifted Wheelie in his arms. He scowled; impatient, overheated, and slightly dizzy with excess charge. The loading docks were located near the base of the tower, and were littered with drones frantically unloading pillaged Autobot technology beneath brown-yellow lighting. In its haste, one drone stomped by and roughly knocked into Blurr’s side.

He stumbled forward and tightened his arms around Wheelie as he braced for a crash- then gasped as a broad servo caught him. Heat flared where Shockwave's palm spread wide against his stomach plating. The gears in his knees buckled; struts turned to hot liquid tar.

Shockwave stared down at him impassively for a long moment, the datapad he’d been trotting around with was awkwardly pinned to his own substantial chest by his gun arm.

“Well-well-what-are-you-staring-at-me-for-huh I’m not thanking you for anything-” Blurr narrowed his optics up at him and struggled to put himself firmly back onto his pedes. “-I didn’t-even-ask-for-your-help no-no-no I did not-” Wheelie babbled along with him, adding his own incomprehensible commentary to the situation.

With perfunctory precision, Shockwave pressed his palm into his abdomen and steadied him into an upright position, then his servo drifted toward Wheelie to brush a thumb across the sparkling’s cheek. It was so light and quick- more of a ghost than an actual, tangible action. His yellow optic watched them for another odd klik before he silently turned away, shuffling the datapad back into his grasp as he continued his inventory check.

Blurr gawked at his back kibble while he lumbered ahead. His intake opened and closed a few times without uttering a word. Vents along his frame yawned wide; dumping heat from his flustered and overcharged frame. Two chirps from Wheelie knocked him out of his stupor and Blurr decided -as he easily sped up his steps to catch up with the gunformer- to let the interaction pass without comment.

It wasn’t the first time he’d let something like this go in the past deca-cycle.

Shockwave had been acting weird. Well. Weirder-than-normal.

Whether it was a servo to the back of Blurr's waist to guide him, brushing frames whenever they passed one another, dragging Blurr on trips around the tower when there was no reason for him to come along, or an optic watching a little too intently when he spoke; Shockwave's attention -both physical and mental- was *on him* and he couldn't seem to escape it. He wasn't sure he wanted to. Loneliness gnawed at him like a scraplet in his chest, he missed talking to other bots and he missed his team. Chromia had always been around to play holo games with (Blurr-always-lost), or Lancer and Greenlight to tease, or Moonracer to race with- he didn't have anyone anymore.

A gust of hot air from one of the open docks hit him as they passed by and he flared his plating out; excess charge and humidity itched at the undersides of his paneling and slicked his protoform, refusing to release from his frame. He needed to run- *bad*. Shockwave's tactile behavior was messing with his systems. He was cooped up all of his cycles, and with no physical activity to disperse his charge, his frame was trying to release it -Blurr's gaze flicked to Shockwave's back- in *other ways*.

Which-was-unacceptable! And humiliating. His HUD pinged with requests to open his valve paneling at least three times a cycle. It was ridiculous. There was nothing attractive about Shockwave to warrant it. Thick, reinforced plating on a well-designed, imposing and powerful gunformer frame was- okay-okay-okay-Blurr-was-not-going-to-comment-on-that. Shockwave's *personality* consisted entirely of vague condescension and blunt practicality, and he had at least ten offline Cybertronians stashed around his lab in various states of dissection. Blurr did not consider that the mark of a sane or desirable mech.

Though- there were moments where he was tolerable. He never asked Blurr to repeat himself (which was a huge pet peeve of Blurr's- he understood he talked fast but why would some bot ask him to repeat himself when he had already said everything he needed to say and then he would have to say it all over again but slower which would take even more time and who would want to do that- constantly?!). Shockwave also wasn't needlessly cruel; that wouldn't be logical, of course. And he'd never hurt Wheelie.

But he did want Wheelie. Blurr could see it- he was just waiting for his chance to dispose of Blurr and then train Wheelie into a *Decepticon* (albeit, an extremely literate Decepticon, if the alphabet toys he spoiled the sparkling with were any indication). Blurr couldn't let that happen. He had to stay valuable and indispensable but constantly being on the verge of spark-overcharge and subsequent death was not helping.

Ahead, Shockwave turned off into a long hallway, leading Blurr and Wheelie away from the docks. None of the security drones followed and Shockwave seemed too lost in his calculations to notice. His large finials twitched every now-and-then as he stomped forward; helm bent to stare down at the datapad screen.

Blurr peeked curiously into each doorway and window they passed. It seemed like mostly storage units: bland, uniform rooms made of matte purple metal and dull security lights. Nothing interesting to look at.

He huffed to himself. In his arms, Wheelie had fallen into recharge. His tiny servos were curled by his facial plating, nasal ridge pressed to Blurr's windshield while the bill on his orange helm clacked against the older mech's chassis with every step.

They turned left at an intersection and went down yet another hallway filled with storage rooms. This time, about three doors down from the intersection, Blurr peeked into a thin slit of a window and spotted something different. A small room, dimly lit, with pure white walls that reflected his own grimy blue-white face back at him. At the center was a single rusty box, the metal obviously neglected and worn from time.

Blurr glanced at Shockwave. The Decepticon was still trudging ahead, oblivious and slow. It wouldn't take long for Blurr to catch up to him...

A tap to the control panel beside the door released it without fuss, much to Blurr's surprise, and it slid open silently. His pedes carried him into the room without a single sound. The flooring was solid black and layered with dust. He swiped his scuffed pede and peered down to find that beneath the filth, the floor was as reflective as the walls; his two optics blinked back at him from the inky surface.

Curious-anxious-impatient, Blurr zipped to the box and crouched over it. The servo not supporting Wheelie fumbled with the ancient keypad for a few moments. Flakes of rust and paint peeled from the container's lid and drifted to the ground when the box was pried open.

At the first glimpse of its contents, Blurr screamed.

It was a purely instinctual reaction; inside the box were two servos, though Blurr would think that calling them *servos* was generous. They were claws- jagged and painful in design- and cupped between them was the severed helm of a mech. Blurr had seen battle wounds -frames blown to shards or seared from blaster fire- and he'd seen some of Shockwave's disturbing experiments -frames gently peeled apart and catalogued- but he'd never seen something like this, something so precisely cruel. So *personal*. The mech's face was sealed into a pained expression and his optics were missing, leaving holes which revealed a helm that had been carved out and left hollow, the brain module and all its accompanying components removed.

Blurr skittered back- the lid fell further open, baring its contents to the room. His stress levels rocketed and excess charge burned his circuits, leaving him dizzy and confused as Wheelie wailed in his arms. The sparkling wriggled, distraught by the feeling of his carrier's erratic EM field.

"What is going on here-" Shockwave skid to a halt at the doorway. His optic was blindingly bright and his cannon arm hummed as if ready to fight off some unseen threat.

Warnings clustered across Blurr's HUD-

[OVERHEATING-IMMINIENT] [SPARK-CASING-WEAKENED]

But it was all ignored as he stared in horror at Shockwave. In his warped, fevered vision, the Decepticon looked terrifying. Monstrous. His massive alien frame loomed overhead, faceless helm watching-watching-watching Blurr.

Then, Shockwave noticed the box.

His flat EM field spiked for the first time with an overwhelming wave of rage that left both Wheelie and Blurr cringing away. Blurr cowered against a wall. His engine squealed and vents gasped wide. “Stay-stay-stay back! Stay-away-from-me-you’re-you’re-you’re- you- why would you do that- how-could-you- how-could-you-do-*that*-”

Shockwave stilled. His helm turned disturbingly slow, moving from Blurr to stare at the severed helm in the box. A silence fell on the storage room; frigid and stifling. Blurr didn’t dare move.

“How could you-?” Shockwave echoed. His old, accented voice sounded dazed.

His EM field snapped inward abruptly, and left a disorienting emptiness behind. He stalked forward and shut the box with a curt *clack* before he turned to stare down at Blurr. Not a hint of his previous anger remained, he was indifferent as usual. Somehow that was more terrifying than the rage.

“You know nothing.” Shockwave said, blunt, as Blurr inched farther from him. “I’d thought I could be lenient with you, *Autobot*; now I see that was an error in judgement.” Blurr dodged Shockwave’s grasping arm when the massive bot moved to seize him.

“No-no-no-no-!” He stumbled and Shockwave took the opening to rip Wheelie from his arms.

Blind with panic, Blurr rushed Shockwave. Gears ground together in his frame as he put the full force of his overcharged energy into his steps and tackled the Decepticon head on. Shockwave stumbled- a fraction of him weighed as much as Blurr’s whole frame, yet the strength of the racer’s speed set the larger bot off balance.

Not for long, though. Shockwave swept his gun arm out and swatted Blurr off as if he were made of tin, flinging him across the room. One of the white walls splintered when it was hit, reflective shards raining around Blurr’s crumpled, steaming frame. Shockwave’s optic glinted in the pieces; large and paralyzing, cold-cold yellow.

Blurr twitched in the rubble. A rush of scrambled sensory data flooded his processor -his antenna-crest was damaged- and his intake was saying something over and over and over yet he couldn’t tell what words it spat out.

[EMERGENCY-SHUTDOWN--COOLDOWN-INITIATED]

A blink -optical shutters closing in slow motion- and then Blurr was out.

--

Light laughter filtered through his audials as Jazz cracked a joke to Lancer at a nearby table. An air vent in the ceiling above his helm blew a soft, cool breeze onto his plating.

“Helloo? Cybertron to Blurr?” A green arm waved in front of him, centimeters from his nasal ridge. Blurr blinked. He looked sideways to find Moonracer’s face squeezed obnoxiously close to his.

She retreated when he turned, pushing a holo-screen projecting a game board closer. Half of the game pieces were purple; the others were blue. “You were doing so good! You gotta keep going, Blurr.”

Blurr blinked again, this time in a rapid burst. His gaze flicked around the serene Autobase rec room. Chromia and Ironhide were arm wrestling in a corner, Kup was halfway to recharge on an old bench by the rec room holo-movie screen, Firestar and Hot Rod bickered over plating decals. Everything felt hazy and mundanely comfortable. Blurr shifted; the seat beneath his aft was cushioned, making him flare out his plating and relax while fresh air smoothed across his protometal.

“Hey, that’s okay. You’re still doing good.” Moonracer wrapped her arm around his shoulders. She pressed a cube of energon into his servos- it tasted faintly sweet on his glossa when it slid down his intake. She smiled, lipplates twisting secretively. “You’ll get there, I know it. You’ve gotta figure it out at some point. Why don’t we continue?”

The holo-screen lit into an explosion of colors, digital confetti raining down on the gameboard. Then, it reset to a new game.

“How about: first one to win this time gets a prize?” She held a golden key and waved it enticingly. “What do you say?”

His cycles were blending together, each joor indistinguishable from the last. He woke; curled on his lumpy berth, and stared at the same four cell walls. He sprinted tiny loops in his cage like a demented turbo-fox. He collapsed on his berth. Repeat.

Repeat-repeat-repeat. He missed Wheelie.

How much time had passed, he couldn’t tell. A deca-cycle? A quartex? A kilocycle? Who knew-because-he-didn't-that’s-for-sure.

He’d managed to straighten out some of the damage from his fight with Shockwave, but something still rattled around in his back kibble when he moved, and his crest was functional but set askew and tender to the touch.

Shockwave never called on him, though he would send a drone down occasionally with a cube of energon and a servo-held recorder. Blurr tried asking, at the end of one of his recordings, about Wheelie. All that had gotten him was half a cube of energon for the next few cycles instead of a full one, and no answers.

He was always hot; fans running at full speed to try and cool down. Half of his brain module must have been melted- it had to have been- he was seeing things, having strange night-fluxes. A permanent divot had been etched into the ground from all the times he'd paced it. His interface panel burned as his frame tried to expel charge in any way it could; lubricant dripped behind thin metal and the blue armor on his thighs felt raw as if he'd just raced fifty laps. He couldn't take this for much longer, he needed *out-out-out*-

--

Wheelie burbled away in Shockwave's lap. The remains of an energon jelly were smeared across his cheeks and intake, with a few chunks of the goopy substance staining the older bot. Shockwave waved a medical scanner across the sparkling and read the results: no history of inoculations, no anti-viral software, and no program updates.

"Hm." His vocalizer rasped low in his throat cabling.

Carefully, while he juggled the sparkling in his grasp, Shockwave pulled out several vaccine plug-ins appropriate for Wheelie's age and slotted them into the corresponding medical ports on the youngling's arm. It stung. Shockwave knew it would and as soon as he was finished, he gently bounced the sparkling on his knee. It distracted Wheelie just as his face screwed up in pain. Confused by the conflicting sensory data, Wheelie chirped twice in surprise, and then seemed to decide to react to the bouncing instead of the pain as his chirps devolved into squeals of delight.

Shockwave listened closely to his vocalizer. The cadence and pattern of his underdeveloped speech program was intriguing, though not unexpected. His carrier also possessed an unusual vocal tic.

That line of thought was shut down immediately. Shockwave had not visited the courier for half a deca-cycle, he did not plan on doing so again until he regained complete control over his own reactions. Emotional behavior was intolerable, and the courier brought it out of him in the most disarming, and unpleasant, of ways.

In his lap, Wheelie twisted rebelliously to smack his dirty servos across Shockwave's chest. The Decepticon watched him for a moment, and made a note in his processor to refrain from giving the youngling any semi-solid energon until he was at least twenty vorns old.

It seemed another solvent bath was in order.

The first one had been a laborious endeavor. The sparkling had been filthy, and though it was clear Blurr had taken care to routinely pick debris out of the more delicate joints and crevasses, he could not have done much more to make his sparkling clean. Shockwave had the luxury of a working solvent bath, a brush, and standard polish. Admittedly, those were the bare essentials a mech could own, but he was not Starscream; he could see no logic in constantly preening his appearance.

Said solvent bath was located in his barely-touched berthroom. So seldom used that Shockwave had converted half of it into an extension of his lab, and he was forced to navigate his way through supplies and crates in order to reach his washrack. As he went, he placed the medical scanner onto his bare berth and made an internal note to return it to its proper place later.

Each habsuite for high-ranking Decepticons in the tower had come standard with both a tub and a shower, though Shockwave preferred the efficiency of the shower, the tub was now a helpful addition as Wheelie splashed in a shallow pool of solvent. He let the sparkling work out some of his energy and roll around in the bath, splattering soap suds along the wall and squealing while Shockwave wiped his own chassis clean. Once finished, he found that Wheelie had discovered that putting his helm face-down into the solvent and releasing air through his intake created foam.

Shockwave intervened before the sparkling swallowed anything; grasping Wheelie by the back of his neck cabling and hauling him out like a feral cybercat. Wheelie beeped rudely, crass for a sparkling his age. Shockwave pulled out a brush and set to work scrubbing the sparkling's seams, sending the youngling into a giggling fit whenever the bristles disturbed sensitive wiring.

He leaned forward to reach a space underneath the sparkling's chin guard and Wheelie tilted his orange helm backward to stare up at him. His blue optics blinked softly inside his round face; cheeks puffed in concentration. He had a far more impish look than his creator. Where Blurr's features were often pinched, as if he were constantly smelling something unpleasant, Wheelie had a look of innocence that was far too convincing to be genuine.

Shockwave anticipated what would happen next, but was too slow to stop it.

Wheelie smeared his sudsy fingers across his single optic, squealing in delight as Shockwave's finials instinctively flared out to compensate for the loss of visual data. Having been through several similar situations with the sparkling over the past deca-cycle, Shockwave did not react as harshly to the touches to his helm as he had the first time. Placidly, he sat back on his heels and wiped his helm clean. His emotion suppressing protocols did not waver for a moment.

"You are difficult," Shockwave commented, tone flat.

Wheelie swiveled his helm left and right to figure out where the voice was coming from and attempted to repeat the words, stumbling across the sounds. Taking advantage of the distraction, Shockwave swept the sparkling out of the tub and dried him off with a hand-held fan.

One third of a bottle of polish later, and Shockwave had a drowsy yet spotless sparkling propped on his chest. As he made his way to the new control room that was part of his most recent project, he considered activating the caretaker drone and leaving Wheelie to recharge with it.

That option was dismissed; it would be illogical to waste the energon on activating the drone. Wheelie would not hinder him in the control room if he was in recharge while Shockwave

worked.

Several joors later his assessment was proven correct as Wheelie continued to recharge without issue on his chest.

Shockwave paused in his work, his processor struck by the stillness of the moment. The control room for his new project -a prototype of a transport system he had invented during his solitude, and referred to as a *Space Bridge*- was situated high in the tower overlooking the construction site for the bridge. He sat at a large chair surrounded by pale blinking screens that cast a gentle glow on the room's purple walls. When he looked ahead, through the large window at the front of the room and past the space bridge, he could see the frail, blackened husk of Iacon stretching on into the distance. It was dusky, hazy, *quiet*. Shockwave surveyed the decay of his planet with wavering detachment, then turned his attention to the sparkling in his care.

Such a stark contrast; he held a new life in his servos while the world died around him. Creation of life, Shockwave thought, was something beyond his scientific capabilities. Something that had eluded him time and again in his experiments and calculations. He could craft warships and bombs, galactic transport systems and deadly viruses, but living mechanisms were a mystery to him. He could build the frame, weave wiring and circuit boards into it and fuel it with energon, but it would have no spark. The results were always the same: empty, mindless drones that could not act beyond his commands.

As he looked at Wheelie, something passed through his protocols and slithered through his processor. He sat for a joor and mulled over it, slowly, carefully, tugging apart the foreign emotion and analyzing it until he understood what it was: *envy*. He was envious, not of the sparkling, but of the unknown variable involved in his creation- his *other* creator. The nameless bot that had played a part in the creation of another living spark, that had indirectly made something that Shockwave had never been able to replicate.

And Blurr- Blurr was a logical choice for a carrier, Shockwave thought. Healthy, with unique CNA, an extremely valuable speed ability, and a decently powerful processor. He was a near ideal for such a thing, since frame-born sparklings inherited more of their carrier's CNA. Physical beauty was immaterial to Shockwave but he did concede that Blurr possessed a conventionally attractive frame, which traits of would undoubtedly pass on to his creations. The more he contemplated, the more Shockwave grew curious. What if -rather than study or offline- he were to create a spark?

Illogical musings, he reasoned to himself when his protocols clamped down. There would be no need for him to do such a thing once the Decepticons returned and claimed control over Cybertron, and Megatron was found.

He *would* be found, Shockwave reiterated to himself, and diligently returned to his work.

The space bridge he had devised would undoubtedly aid him once he made contact with Megatron. It would be powerful enough to transport energon, supplies, and perhaps even Cybertronians. For now, it was only a skeleton structure, a rudimentarily thin tower with a

flared-out top that would open to receive transported items. Shockwave had ideas for more elegant designs; circular and refined gates that could be positioned throughout space and used for transporting whole armadas, but those could wait until he had more materials to spare for construction. He was already using at least 3/5ths of his energon reserves for this last resort project.

Absorbed as he was in his work; Shockwave nearly missed the alert ping sent to him by one of his security drones.

Halfway through reading the alert Shockwave had already risen from his seat in alarm. He left Wheelie with a security drone and explicit orders to take the sparkling to the caretaker drone and activate it, before he rushed down to the cell block level.

He approached the cell's plasma bars with caution, unwilling to be caught in a trap if Blurr was deceiving him, but no plot unfolded itself. Instead, he spotted the courier collapsed on his berth, unresponsive. When he drew closer and stood over the Autobot's prone form, Blurr blinked up at him sluggishly. His face-plates glowed with fever as electrical charge visibly crashed outward from his chassis like a wave, dancing across his armor while his blue legs kicked in a feeble imitation of running.

Shockwave had never seen such a thing. His processor rifled through information it had on racer frames and only came up with one condition. But it made no sense, extended confinement should not have had such a drastic effect on the racer. Though he could see it happening before his optic; if the charge emitted by Blurr's spark grew too great for his frame to expel, it would at some point bounce back and damage his spark chamber, leading to overcharge and spark burnout.

Swiftly, Shockwave lifted Blurr into his hold and winced when electrical charge seared him. Blurr opened his intake to speak but all that emerged was a cycling *tick-tick tick-tick* as his vocalizer strained, then pattered out into a long whine.

Blurr's struts sagged as if that attempt at speech had drained him, helm lolling back to rest on Shockwave's shoulder.

The medical scanner -Shockwave remembered with a start- was in his habsuite. An unfortunately long distance from the cell block, but he made good time getting there even as Blurr thrashed in his arms, sparking from his seams and emitting steam from the many vents along his frame. By the time he'd placed Blurr onto his berth, the Autobot seemed more lucid, sitting on his own while Shockwave waved the medical scanner across his chassis. It was not strong enough to give him a more than basic reading of the Autobot's spark, but it would be enough to gain an insight as to what was happening.

The results, when they loaded, were awe inspiring. Blurr was an oddity, a rarity of cyberbiology; the spark inside the Autobot's chest was disproportionately powerful in comparison to his frame size class, and it was no doubt the cause of Blurr's unmatched speed, as well as his current condition. Shockwave's servo twitched, he could almost feel the scalpel in his palm, itching to explore and understand the racer's unique physiology.

Two white servos wrapped around his and pulled the scanner away, bringing him back to the urgency of the moment. Blurr swayed close, blue optics intent, cognizant, and direct as he smoothed his palms down Shockwave's gauntlet armor and traced his fingers up purple shoulder pauldrons. Shockwave shifted. The sensation of touch registered as pleasant in his processor.

Logically, he could not let the courier offline yet. There was a wealth of knowledge still lodged in his helm, inaccessible to Shockwave. Yet- there was no way to stop the overcharge from occurring at this stage. Allowing the courier to run free across the city to dispel the charge would help, but he doubted the courier could even speed-walk in the state he was in.

There was no other way to release the overcharge, *except-*

Blurr slid into his lap, chassis pressed to chassis, and Shockwave's audials registered the distinctive *click* of a panel sliding back.

Chapter End Notes

he got baby fever fr

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Your own secret to none reveal;

It will be lost when it is told-”

-Arabian Nights

Turbulence rattled through Nacelle’s wings as he turned in a wide arc, and what would have been a graceful, sloping curve through the sky was rendered jerky and juvenile. Had his trine mates been alive they would have taunted him for the poorly executed maneuver.

Another burst of wind pummeled his plating, and he reluctantly rolled down into a flight position that was lower to the surface. Nacelle knew Cybertron’s atmosphere more intimately than he did the inside of his own processor; an innate knowledge and understanding of the planet’s weather patterns that all seekers were created with, and so he also knew that something was wrong. The acid storms were getting worse. Ravaging the metallic landscape, eating away at long abandoned buildings and highways. The surface below him was a far cry from the glittering pool of lights and traffic he and his trine had once flown over.

He had half a mind to simply fly away from the planet. There was nothing left for him, and certainly there was nothing left for Shockwave and his unfortunate racer. They were living in a trash heap, slowly starving to extinction, and it seemed far more appealing to fly off into the stars and travel until he found someplace better.

A smattering of acid drops, fortunately not too acidic (yet), drew him back to reality.

‘Find someplace better,’ Nacelle scoffed internally, *‘And enter stasis lock before I even touch the ground.’* He’d starve himself into a coma on a trip that long, especially with his fuel levels being what they were.

Ahead, a break in the clouds revealed Polyhex’s mangled skyline. With it was an enormous storm cloud that squatted over the city like a fat construction bot. Nacelle looped around once more, a frantic U-turn as panic rose in his systems and he sped away from the city.

During his retreat, he remembered that sector fourteen was located in Polyhex, the *one* place Shockwave had been most anxious for him to patrol. For a crazy moment Nacelle considered

turning back to try and check out the area, before his sensor reports came back with an analysis of the storm clouds.

Shockwave could patrol that sector *himself* if he was so concerned about it. Nacelle wasn't going to get his wings melted off just to patrol a tiny, empty, *useless* sector.

--

Blurr shifted, and it almost felt like everything moved in unbearable slow motion.

His frame seared along Shockwave's. The Decepticon was cool to the touch. No engine rumbled beneath his thick plating as his gun alt-mode did not require one. The thought sent a thrill up Blurr's struts. His hypersensitive systems processed and catalogued each and every difference between himself and the gunformer. The metal beneath his touch was alien to him; heavy reinforced steel, welted and dented with age, coated in a matte purple hue.

Blurr plastered himself closer to Shockwave's large chest and wound his arms around grey neck cabling. He panted; wet steam hissed from several vents on his legs. His blue hips swiveled, desperate for friction as his exposed valve dripped and throbbed. He couldn't think, he wanted-wanted-wanted-wanted-

He wanted to speak, but when he opened his intake to talk, his vocalizer fritzed out again due to the excess charge and all that came out was that annoying *tick-tick tick-tick*, when what he wanted to say was, '*Please-please-please-please-hurry-*'

Shockwave's systems audibly stalled.

Blurr could have thrown his servos up in exasperation but an idea struck him through his overheated haze. He leaned forward and licked his glossa across an oversized finial, lavishing the sensory appendage with nips and quick kisses. Shockwave groaned- long and low and raspy. His throat cabling vibrated oddly with the noise and Blurr realized *that* was where his voice came out, since he had no intake. He pressed a kiss there too- single minded in his fascination.

A rush of motion and next thing Blurr knew he was flat on his back plates while Shockwave crouched over him. Bathed in the yellow glow from Shockwave's gaze, Blurr winced. He'd landed awkwardly and his damaged crest was crushed against the berth. Shockwave paused, finials flicking in thought. With careful precision he lifted Blurr's helm and slid his gun arm beneath to prop it up. Blurr was too lost in delirium and heat to notice the strangely considerate action, especially as Shockwave reached down to cup a massive servo over his valve. Thick purple fingers slipped across wet navy-blue folds, dipped between rubber lips before dragging upward to rub across his bright white node.

Blurr thrashed, pedes kicking out and almost whacking Shockwave as he overloaded from the slightest contact. Electricity raced across his limbs, stinging when it dispersed. Shockwave's finials flared out comically and his heavy EM field faltered with faint surprise when Blurr canted his hips for more- that overload having only released an infinitesimal amount of charge.

“Ah.” Shockwave seemed to realize something. Why-he-was-even-thinking-at-a-time-like-this, Blurr didn't know.

The Decepticon doubled his efforts; working with ceaseless efficiency, his palm ground against Blurr's node, excruciatingly slow as the friction sent little zings of pleasure through the racer's struts. Shockwave drew out two more overloads, slickly rubbing and pinching and pressing until he was able to slip one of his large fingers inside the racer's entrance.

With a crackle Blurr's vocalizer finally onlined and he squealed- legs clenched around Shockwave's servo while he thrust into the racer, lighting sensors inside his valve one-by-one. Heat flared with every touch, burning-burning-burning his processor, melting him into a molten mess while his legs fell limp and his spinal strut arched to get a better angle.

His gaze caught Shockwave's through his fever. The Decepticon was focused completely, unwaveringly, on him.

Two fingers slipped in while he was distracted and filled the habsuite with obscene squelching. “Oh-!-oh-oh-oh-don't-don't-don't-stop-don't-oh-please-please-ple-” Shockwave looked to his face when he spoke; blocky featureless helm tilting to the side in contemplation.

Then- his servo sped up, forcing more babble to spill from Blurr's intake.

At some point, Shockwave withdrew completely from Blurr. The sound of an interface panel retracting stopped the racer before he could complain and he looked to see Shockwave's spike pressurize; thick and proportional to his frame, purple shaft lined with raised ridges that lead to its silver-grey head. Blurr's knee joints clanged when he anxiously pressed his legs together.

Shockwave parted his legs with ease as he curled over the racer's frame and ground his spike down, slipping through the racer's soaked folds, thick ridges catching on a swollen anterior node. Shaking through another small overload, Blurr grappled at the Decepticon's frame and searched for a place to cling to, and instead found himself off-kilter when Shockwave gripped him by the hip plating and flipped him onto his servos and knee joints.

An impressive amount of weight and cool metal encased Blurr from behind. He shivered when the unsettling memory of cold servos and a severed helm resurfaced through his overcharged haze- but Shockwave made no attempt to stop or restrain him. He only patiently moved closer, the head of his spike slowly pressing into the fidgety racer's valve.

“S-Shockwave-! I think-I-think-we-should-we-should-go-faster-fast-yes- I think-” Blurr's babble was ignored while the Decepticon continued to sedately press inside, spike activating nodes deep within his valve. Blurr whined when his ceiling node was brushed- then wailed,

servos scrabbling on the berth as Shockwave's spike *kept going*. Only fully seated once the head of his spike nudged at the rubber-lined entrance of Blurr's gestation tank.

Shockwave wrapped his good arm around Blurr's waist, his large servo spread low across the courier's stomach plating (almost possessive is what Blurr might have called it if he were a more naïve bot but he wasn't naïve so obviously he wouldn't describe it like that *however* it did fee-) to keep the racer in place when he pulled out and then thrust back in.

Lost in white-hot heat, Blurr's elbow-joints gave out. He whined, limp while Shockwave held his frame with ease and continued his powerful thrusts that sent him skidding on the berth. The Decepticon bent closer to the racer beneath him, putting his weight onto his gun arm, which subsequently brought his throat cabling level with the top of Blurr's helm. A shiver wracked through Blurr when his sensitive crest picked up on barely-there vibrations from Shockwave's vocalizer; quiet, hoarse moans emitted whenever his spike bottomed out. Charge whipped wildly from Blurr's armor as his ceiling node was repeatedly and unerringly hit. The broad head of Shockwave's spike bumped the rim of Blurr's forge over-and-over-and-over while his servo on his stomach plating crept lower to brush the wet tips of his purple fingers across a swollen anterior node.

Overwhelmed and wracked with stimulation from multiple angles- Blurr overloaded once more. His frame convulsed while senseless words tumbled from him. Above him, Shockwave quietly groaned and crowded closer as if it would drive his spike deeper into the racer's rippling valve, hips shallowly pumping while transfluid filled his gestation tank.

Tension left Blurr's struts in a rush when Shockwave carefully withdrew and manually slid his interface paneling shut for him. Blurr blinked, sluggish bliss sliding across his sensory net for a long moment. The haze of recharge lingered at the edge of his awareness, closing in fast until-

Sharp, piercing pain stabbed his chest plating, emanating outward from his spark. Blurr gasped and curled into a ball. His servos clawed at his chest deliriously.

Something was wrong-wrong-wrong-wrong-wrong- he had to- he-had-to-

--

Something was wrong.

Shockwave's systems buzzed pleasantly in a post overload daze, but Blurr's sudden shift in behavior cut through it and left him alert and alarmed. Blurr was unresponsive- tearing at his own chest plates while nonsensical rambling spilled from his intake. Quickly, Shockwave grasped his wrist gauntlets and pried his servos away. He had to adjust himself to avoid the

frantic blue legs that kicked at him with considerable strength, and leaned in close to peer at Blurr's chassis.

There were deep scratches along the transformation seams, as if the courier had forgotten he could simply open them with an internal command.

He did not seem to hear Shockwave when he tried to get him to reveal his spark. Frustration, and perhaps fear, nipped through Shockwave's protocols before it could be suppressed and finally he snapped:

"Blurr." At his designation Blurr's narrow blue optics focused on Shockwave, awareness surfacing for a moment. "It is imperative that you open your chest plates. Now."

Surprise came through the Autobot's EM field, like he had truly forgotten he could open it without his servos, before his chassis split and a blinding blue light filled Shockwave's habsuite.

In awe he could not control, Shockwave leaned closer to watch the mature dark blue spark spin wildly within Blurr's chest. It thrashed at its confines and threatened to burst free in a way Shockwave had never seen before. He had to force himself back into focus, instead turning his attention to the electricity that had found its way to Blurr's spark. It was worse than he had calculated- the charge had already entered his spark chamber.

Perhaps...

Theories and possible solutions knitted themselves together in Shockwave's processor-

A spark merge. A light, surface level spark merge may disperse the charge, especially as Shockwave was far larger and possessed more systems and machinery than the light-framed racer did, and so he would easily be able to disperse the energy across his own frame.

Shockwave internally debated a moment over whether the decision would be logical. He had never willingly shown his spark to *anyone*, let alone merged sparks with another bot. Shockwave had no frame of reference on how the experience felt or what effects it had aside from the medical and scientific texts he had read. Though, he reasoned, he could do a surface level merge; just a mere brush of sparks in order to draw away some of the charge that wrapped itself around Blurr's spark. It would be non-invasive, barely involved, and most importantly: it would not result in the creation of a newspark, like a deeper spark merge surely would, what with Blurr's activated forge and transfluid already available within it.

Another sparkling was out of the question. Their planet barely had enough resources for the one sparkling that already existed on it.

Processor decided, Shockwave allowed his chest to transform, and watched as the dim orange glow of his spark lit across Blurr's face.

Chapter End Notes

tbh I think transformer sparks would be like (in my rough knowledge) stars and especially how stars age and change temperature/color/size as they get older. So like a sparkling would have a small and extremely hot white spark, an adult would have a warm dark blue spark, middle age would be yellow and slightly cooler, orange is like a little past middle age, and suuuuper old would be a large dark red and much cooler spark.

I know I've mentioned somewhere that Blurr and Moonracer are considered young, it's mainly because from the femmes' and Shockwave's middle-aged perspective, they seem young. Blurr's spark is a mature blue though, since he and Moonracer are like the Cybertronian equivalent of wild 20-something yr olds.

sorry if this chapter has got a lot of errors!! i've written like two five-page essays in one week i'm so tired of writing lol 😂

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“-If your own breast cannot conceal,

How can another better hold?”

-Arabian Nights

Shockwave merged into a spark that was pure motion.

Disoriented, he attempted to ground himself as his attention turned inward, only distantly aware of his frame outside of the spark merge, but wherever he sought to gain hold there was nothing but shifting sound and movement and light. A raucous noise like several voices speaking at once assaulted him. Try as he might to hear; once he deciphered one word, the sentences would change, leaving him to start anew with a whole new set of information. Visual data was not much better. Images and memories flicked by so quickly they blended into one another and devolved into useless blobs of color. An uncharacteristic wave of frustration came over Shockwave, then. His instinctual coding wanted him to slow down and steady himself, to better parse through the information he was receiving.

But Blurr's spark demanded action. An immediate response to the immediate stimuli presented was required.

Boundless energy swept through him, searing dizzily through his wiring the closer he pressed to the racer's blue spark. He saw faces of bots he did not know- a smiling light green femme, a flame-painted mech running- and bots that he did recognize and memories that were not his own -Elita One's strong servo clasped proudly on his pauldron, and Wheelie crying in a tunnel- as crisp and neat images whipping past him. The emotions that tied themselves to the images were overwhelming. Miniature supernovas of despair and happiness and anger bursting across their merge and all-but frying his processor.

One memory, or perhaps, one *sensation* created by numerous memory files compiled together, rose above the rest and gripped him:

With the ease of oil cutting across water, he was running. His frame was light and his spark a miniature Hadeen within his chassis. It was intoxicating. Pure power and motion and endless vigor wrapped around the feeling of bliss.

Shockwave was immediately lost to it, unaware of the way he had shifted his weight down to his elbow joints, chassis melded against the whimpering courier beneath him as their sparks fully and completely enmeshed. Message after message bombarded his HUD:

[EMOTION SUPPRESSANT PROTOCOLS UPDATE: ERROR] [ERROR] [CODE CORRUPTED-]

And all were subsequently ignored.

--

When he awoke his vision was strange. Tunnel-like and dim. And he ached, every inch of his frame felt as if it had been scooped out and made hollow with a blunt knife. Gingerly, he tried to move his left arm but it was so heavy- a million tons of metal that fought against him when he tried to lift it. He was aware of things crackling and crunching beneath his frame. Whatever he was lying on was unstable and- and wet in some areas? He couldn't smell anything, though.

He paused. His vision strained against the green darkness above him and he thought he could see a... street light? He tried once more to smell and an error message popped up: *[Requested system not found]*.

'What-?' He gasped, and then jolted when the gasp felt strange. Disjointed. As if he'd done it but had not done it. He finally raised his servo.

Something jagged and strange flapped in front of him and he stared at it for a long moment, confused, until a stray beam of yellow light caught on the shape and he realized it was his servo. It was- it was wrong-

He pressed his mangled claws to his helm and screamed when he felt nothing. No intake, no nasal ridge, just smooth, frigid metal. He thrashed where he lied, frightened and alone, and desperately turned his helm to figure out where he was. Disturbed by his movements, something tumbled onto him from the objects around his frame. He tried to grasp the object with one servo but his new claws were unwieldy and difficult, and he ended up using both palms to smash the object between them and pick it up.

It was an empty oil can.

Rage and fear shook him as he realized where he had been dumped; a garbage disposal container. Sickly green-blue light flashed from somewhere outside the container and lit up the

sky. He turned his helm away from it on instinct and cried when he came no-face to face with a severed helm discarded close by. His actual helm was empty and distorted and rotting besides him. Why- How- how could this have been done to *him*-?

Blurr jerked. That-wasn't-him-

All at once awareness rushed back to Blurr. He jolted out of recharge and found himself alone and shivering in a cluttered habsuite. The memory he had fallen into dissolved away slowly, as if it were a difficult layer of grime.

The racer lied on his side and curled in on himself, plating clamped to his clammy protoform as he remembered the events of the past cycle.

Blurr was grateful to be online (of course he didn't want to be dead that's why he'd thrown himself at Shockwave in-the-first-place-!) but the lingering after-effects of the spark merge were unsettling. Shockwave's memories had been endless and cold. His *spark* was cold. It had felt eerily similar to the way the underground layers of Iacon had felt- vast and bottomless, memories so ancient Blurr could not comprehend them. The distorted and stunted emotions in most of Shockwave's spark had made it easy for him to somewhat-keep-his-helm straight. Except for that one memory-

Another shiver wracked his frame. He never wanted to feel anything like *that* again.

He didn't know what it had meant, or what anything meant anymore. His processor kept catching on the mystery of the severed helm in the box and unsuccessfully tried to make sense of what he had uncovered about Shockwave.

Frustrated, Blurr shoved his face into the semi-malleable berth and resisted the urge to rant into the mesh pillow. Shockwave's scent lingered; the smell of standard oil and musky armor polish. Blurr's legs rubbed against one another as he remembered what *else* he and Shockwave had done. A glance downward revealed that his thigh plating was embarrassingly clean- the Decepticon must have cleaned them while Blurr had been in recharge. There were still scuff marks on the insides of his legs, little dents and scratches, but no purple paint transfers with them.

That-was-another-thing. Where was Shockwave?

Blurr's curiosity grew with every passing klik and he reluctantly dragged himself from the berth to investigate his new surroundings. He had an issue while getting up, since racer's frames were cut down drastically for speed, with lighter plating and less internal systems in order to make sure he encountered very little wind resistance, any fluctuation in his weight disrupted his balance. The large amount of transfluid in his gestation tank –Blurr fidgeted in place, flustered- threw his equilibrium off for a moment.

Carefully, once he'd adjusted to the change, Blurr darted around the room. It-was- *junky*. His nasal ridge crinkled a little as he poked into a crate next to the berth and found that it was full of test tubes. One of the tubes had what looked like a half-formed organic reptilian in it. The

rest of the hab wasn't much better; he found several disassembled bombs in the closet, an entire lab table stuffed in the corner, and three boxes simply labeled 'BIOHAZARD: CASSETICONS DO NOT TOUCH' with a hot-pink symbol of a dying Cybertronian plastered next to the label. A couple of old datapads were placed on a dusty chair and seemed long-forgotten, so Blurr snooped through them and found that they were filled with passive-aggressive notes from various Decepticons complaining about the tower's setup.

It didn't seem as though Shockwave spent much of his time there, but Blurr was sure it must be his habsuite.

He crept his way to a doorway that was opposite the entrance and couldn't contain his excited yelp when he saw what was behind it.

'Thank-Primus-' A washrack! He wasted no time. Zipping into the room, he took a klik to ogle a large tub in the corner before making a beeline for the shower. Deca-cycles worth of filth was meticulously scrubbed away from his plating. He picked dirt from his transformation seams, debris from the delicate joints in his legs, and flared his plating to wash out the metallic dust that had collected near his protoform. Strangely, the transfluid in his forge would not drain away as he'd thought it would. He shrugged to himself- it'd probably just be absorbed into his frame- and moved on from thinking about it. In a moment of pettiness, Blurr used the entire bottle of bland standard soap that'd been left out. His pettiness continued when he finished rinsing himself spotless and investigated the rest of the washroom, and found a servo-held buffer along with several bottles of Shockwave's standard polish. He spent the next two joors gleefully polishing his frame to perfection.

He had never been excessively vain (like Sunstreaker and Hot Rod- and even Firestar- had been) but he did have standards!

Once he was satisfied, he observed his own reflection in a mirror on one of the washroom walls, which was huge for him but probably-maybe-definitely not large at all for a bot of Shockwave's size.

He looked healthy.

Shockwave had kept him well-fueled the past few deca-cycles; his energon levels were far higher than they'd ever been while surviving with Elita's team, and his color nanites were vibrant, making the shades of blue on his armor stand out.

Not-to-mention, his spark was no longer suffering from excess charge. Though, that would surely change if Shockwave decided to shove him back into his cell, and Blurr realized he really-really-really did not want to go back into a cell. He'd do *anything* to avoid that again. He'd rather offline from starvation than spark overcharge.

But, the lack of stress on his frame at that moment made his struts relax, further exaggerating the appearance of overall healthiness.

Blurr took a closer look and preened, noting that his crest had been fixed and was no longer crooked and painful on his helm. Another thing Shockwave had done while he'd been in recharge.

Finished with the washroom, he zipped back out to the main part of the hab. He paused when he reached the berth as a strange, fluttery feeling tingled in his chassis. Panicked, as a reminder of the horrible pain that had shot through his spark just a cycle ago flashed through his processor, he pressed a servo to his windshield and froze.

Several long moments went by but the feeling did not worsen. Blurr relaxed. The sensation felt soft, warm, and a little rapid, like it was pulsing *almost* in time with the rapid beat of his spark. It passed after a few klicks, leaving Blurr standing in the middle of the hab, his brow ridges drawn low in confusion.

He wasn't given much time to ponder the odd feeling as a drone chose that moment to enter the hab, the door opening with a quiet *whoosh*. Blurr jumped and skittered to the edge of the room, fearing the worst, but stopped short when he realized *which* drone had entered and *what* it held in its rudimentary servos.

“Wheelie!”

His sparkling squealed audial-piercingly loud in reply, wriggling wildly in the caretaker drone's hold. Blurr had never moved so quickly in his entire functioning- he snatched his sparkling and squeezed him to his chassis. “Wheelie-Wheelie-Wheelie-”

Said sparkling excitedly beeped back at him in reply, and he rubbed their nasal ridges together, smiling whenever Wheelie's orange helm knocked into his.

It took both of them several long breems to calm down and only then did Blurr realize that the caretaker was still there, and had been beeping a little binary message at him.

[Autobot is free to go] [Return to tower for rations] [Do not leave Iacon borders][Autobot is-]

“Mhm-okay-okay-okay-I-get-it-yeah-okay-” Blurr listened with half an audial as he inspected Wheelie. His sparkling was so clean! The drone's beeping grated on their moment and so Blurr nudged the thing (he did not like that would-be-replacement carrier-bot no-way was Blurr going to be replaced-) gently out of the room with the side of his pede.

Once the door shut, the caretaker's message finally registered in Blurr's processor.

His intake dropped open and he stared at the closed, but not locked, door.

Suspicious, Blurr opened the door and stepped out of the hab. Wheelie burbled away, perched on Blurr's hip plating, oblivious to his carrier's dawning excitement. He stood in the drab purple hallway for exactly 1/4th of a klick before he securely adjusted Wheelie to his windshield and flat out sprinted from the tower at full speed. Zipping down hallways and staircases and past security drones that ignored his escape, he didn't think twice during the entire trip. He wasn't going to waste his chance.

Once outside, he didn't stop. He cut clear across Iacon until the tower was a little blip on the horizon, and the red-orange light from a rising Hadeen spread over his heaving frame.

The afterimage of the courier's departure from the tower still lingered on the monitor screen. Shockwave opened the live video feed from several other security cameras he had placed all across Iacon and continued to track Blurr as he ran, almost incomprehensibly quick, through the city. He only sat back and looked away from the screen once he'd confirmed that Blurr would not attempt to leave Iacon; instead circling back once he'd reached the southern border.

From his HUD, a single string of messages occupied his attention.

[Suppressant Protocols: Inactive] [Protocols: Unretrievable]

Shockwave attempted to access the code he'd created- even initiated a hardline connection to the computer so he could pull it up externally, but it was far too corrupted to salvage. Frustration- an alien emotion- welled in him, completely unobstructed and intense as it flooded his processor with unneeded data. It was burning and overwhelming and all he could do was clench his single servo tightly and weather through the sensation. The wiring in his palm ached from the gesture.

He had miscalculated. Greatly.

The spark merge had been too intense to resist. He had lost himself in the courier's spark, merged too deeply and as a result he'd damaged certain parts of his own systems. The one thing that allowed him mastery over his emotions was now nonfunctional and it would take him quartexes, at the very least, to recreate it. He could still see the logical path and the most reasonable actions he should take, but now instead of being able to follow it unhindered by sentiment, he was bombarded with worthless data from his spark.

Data that told him he felt *annoyed* when his drones brought him cold energon instead of warm, because it made the tube in his neck that he used to ingest fuel feel uncomfortable, or that he felt *pleased* when he looked at the many in-progress projects in his lab. Perhaps the most worthless data he had received, out of everything, had been when he had surfaced from the merge and found Blurr in recharge beneath him. Shockwave had *enjoyed* looking down at his beautiful blue frame; at lax white face plates, and the unconscious curve of thin lips.

It was with great effort that Shockwave had made the logical decision to release the courier. He needed to recuperate and repair himself so that he could once again be free of emotion. Something that would be impossible with Blurr nearby, distracting Shockwave with the way he'd smirk after delivering a particularly snarky comment, or with the attractive shape of his hip armor when he ran circles in the lab. No. It would be best if he allowed the courier and his sparkling- or *sparklings*, which, after such a deep spark merge, was undoubtedly the case- to go. He could recapture them at a later time and extract the rest of the Alpha Trion files then. It would be an adequate temporary solution; it was not as though Blurr could go far with Shockwave's energon supply being the only source of fuel on the planet.

He had released Blurr... but the addition of emotional data had made it near unbearable to watch the courier go. Despite how he tried to reason to himself that it was the rational action to take, he could not help but itch under his plating with the desire to keep close what he now felt... *possessive* over. Blurr was *his*, and the sparklings were *his*. Logical reasoning would not make the sentiment abate; only the realization that Cybertron, itself, belonged to him and so the courier would find no place to truly escape him, made the feeling lessen.

Shockwave turned from his console to let his optic gaze out of the window, his helm propped on his fist in deep thought.

Megatron had appointed him Guardian of Cybertron. It was only now that he truly appreciated the title; *satisfaction* humming in his circuits while he surveyed the horizon of his planet.

--

It was strange to suddenly be free, or at least sort-of-free since he still had to stay inside Iacon and rely on stops every half deca-cycle to the fueling station at the base of Shockwave's tower.

Blurr hadn't been sure what to do at first. He could go wherever he pleased in the city since Shockwave's drones were no longer a threat to him, but first on his processor had been to find somewhere for him and Wheelie to stay. Which was both easy and hard- there was no end to the free real estate in Iacon, but most of it was scrap. The only building he'd found that had been suitable for habitation was an old bar, *Maccadam's Old Oil House*, or so the crumbling neon sign outside the building read.

Blurr liked it- he liked it a lot. There was something comforting about the bar. It also didn't hurt that it had plenty of space for Wheelie to crawl around like a tiny hyper maniac once he had thrown out all the old tables and chairs, and the upper level of the building had come complete with a small habsuite, kitchen, and washrack. The latter two were still somewhat functional, but Blurr suspected that was only due to subtle meddling from Shockwave, rather than any sort of luck on Blurr's part.

Shockwave was a lingering enigma, always in the back of Blurr's processor. He hadn't directly seen or heard from the Decepticon since he'd been freed. There had also been no requests for more of Alpha Trion's files, which made him anxious. He wasn't sure whether he should be concerned, suspicious, or offended. He didn't know what it *meant*. Why would Shockwave just let him go? Why would he let *Wheelie* go?

And the strange fluttering sensation in his spark would not go away.

In fact, it had gotten more persistent. A constant and oddly comforting thrum. He would only ever really worry about it late at night, when he would curl up on a cushioned recharge mat he'd laid out in his new habsuite, Wheelie recharging quietly at his side. Toys scattered

haphazardly around the floor would cast soft shadows under the starlight that shone in through the hab's large windows, and he'd worriedly press a servo to his humming chassis, wondering what was happening to him.

Excess charge was no longer a concern at least. He ran whenever he wanted, however fast he wanted, and enjoyed exploring Iacon with his bitlet with little to no stress. He was well-fueled, sheltered, and had everything he needed but he still felt something was missing.

He was lonely. Blurr *liked* to talk, especially when the bot he was talking to didn't interrupt him or tell him to shut his intake. Or when the bot had been Moonracer. He talked to Wheelie. Wheelie, who seemed to be getting better at mimicking sounds, but had developed a habit of repeating things twice. But Wheelie couldn't hold a conversation and Blurr very-very-much wanted someone to talk to.

A trip to the destroyed half of Iacon one cycle, to finally scout out his team's devastated base, had harshly reminded him that he only had one other bot that he could talk to now.

That one bot, who was *avoiding* him. That was the only way Blurr could explain it- because how else could he explain a mech suddenly ceasing to hold him captive and also stopping any and all contact or communication?

With a sigh from his vents, Blurr pulled himself out of his thoughts and placed a cube he'd been polishing back onto a bar shelf. He looked at the neat, sparkling rows of cups and wondered why he had even bothered cleaning them. On the other side of the bar table Wheelie repeatedly slammed a toy into the wall, chirping and beeping whenever it hit.

Mildly annoyed, Blurr leaned over the table and stared down at Wheelie. His EM field flickered with disapproval while he raised a brow ridge at his sparkling.

"Toys are not for smashing Wheelie-Wheelie we've been over this I don't know-*how-many*-times now I don't want to-" Wheelie cooed at him, a sing-song little sound, and then slammed the toy into the wall again.

Blurr plucked the toy from Wheelie's grasp and watched while his sparkling threw a mini fit. "Well-well-what-did-I-say-I-said- *no* smashing -and-what-did-you-do?" Wheelie puffed his cheeks out and glared up at his carrier.

Unimpressed, Blurr turned his attention to the toy. It was the alphabet cube Shockwave had made. The caretaker drone had brought down a small box of toys half a deca-cycle ago when Blurr had last stopped by the tower. The toy's colorful corners and edges had been thoughtfully rounded out, and the letters were a clear and unembellished form of Cybertronian script, easy for a sparkling to read. It looked as though it had been made by servo.

Shockwave was certainly strange; capable of both horrible apathetic cruelty and an odd, practical kindness.

Suddenly determined as an idea formed in his processor, Blurr set the toy onto the bar top and sprinted to the door, snatching Wheelie along the way. He didn't let Wheelie's confused

wriggling slow him while he cut his way through rubble-strewn streets straight to Shockwave's tower. Shockwave had said he couldn't *leave*, but mentioned nothing about Blurr coming *back* to the upper levels of the tower. True to Blurr's suspicions none of the security drones so much as twitched in his direction and every door keypad he pressed opened for him easily. He ran, completely unhindered, through the tower's chilly purple halls. He could still remember the way to Shockwave's lab and his frame turned around corners on autopilot as he went.

His optics flashed in surprise when the heavily protected door to the lab also opened instantly for him, as if Shockwave had forgotten to lock him out.

It was quiet inside the lab's dim depths. Blurr was grateful his pedes were naturally silent by design and that Wheelie was being good. He crept around large and vaguely concerning looking projects until he came upon the center of the room where Shockwave's main workspace sat. He spied Shockwave immediately. The Decepticon's massive bulky form was hunched over a table, his single servo working on a delicate and complex piece of machinery.

Unsure of what to do when the mental steam he'd built up to bring himself all the way there suddenly dissipated, Blurr shuffled anxiously. His left pede knocked into a crate and ended the suspense for him. Shockwave turned around in surprise at the noise. His cannon hummed to life in a klik and then powered off just as fast when he realized who was in his lab.

He emerged from his half-hiding spot with caution. Shockwave- Shockwave's reaction was weird: his blocky helm twitched up at and down as he stared at Blurr with open surprise that was also plainly projected in his EM field.

"Blurr," Shockwave rasped, and his vocalizer gargled for moment before it reset. "What are you doing in my laboratory?"

Blurr was instantly irritated which he hadn't meant to be but what kind of a question was that and just who did Shockwave think he was huh-

"What do you mean what am I doing here what are *you* doing here I haven't seen or heard from you in exactly two-point-three-decacycles and I don't know what kind of trick or scheme or game you're playing but-I-do-not-appreciate-it-" Blurr stomped closer as he spoke, hounding him with a reproachful finger raised to punctuate his words.

Almost nervously, Shockwave stepped backward with every one of Blurr's forward steps, until the racer had the larger bot cornered against his lab bench. His finials gave an awkward flap. "-Deceitful machinations would be illogical in such a situation as ours-" He tried.

"-just-be-straightforward-if-you-want-the-Alpha-Trion-files-and-furthermore- What-?" Blurr switched topics, "-what do you mean our situation-?"

Confusion settled over Blurr that was not his own. Shockwave's EM field was thick with it.

"The sparklings." He said, simply, as if that made any more sense than anything else he'd been saying.

“Your processing unit is fried-senile-completely-gone what do you mean sparklings – sparklings-*plural*- as in more than one sparkling there's only one sparkling here Shockwave-” Blurr snipped, condescending as he pointedly shook Wheelie in the crook of his arm. Wheelie laughed and whistled out nonsense, tiny servos making grabbing motions at Shockwave.

Shockwave seemed to collect himself and leaned closer to Blurr. Three quartexes ago Blurr would have been frightened by the move. Now he only fidgeted, plating shifting while flustered heat ran through his frame.

“You are currently sparked- are you not? My calculations placed a 99.68% likelihood of conception after our... activities.” The Decepticon’s optic dimmed slightly while he gazed down at Blurr. “I assumed you would be aware of this, having carried before-”

Blurr threw an exasperated arm into the air. “Oh-! You assume way-way-way too often Wheelie isn’t *mine* well he is mine but I didn't carry him but not like I'd want to tell you that when you were going to offline me you know if you weren't such a-stick-up-the-aft-know-it-all then you could have *asked* me about it instead of-”

Then the scientist’s words sank in. “-But I can’t be sparked no-way-no-way there's no way-!” But it was starting to make sense, to Blurr’s horror, and all of the strange things he’d been experiencing started lining up; the fluttering feeling, and the way the weight in his forge had not dispersed.

Shockwave steadied him with a broad servo to the back of his waist, and Blurr leaned into it when his knee joints went wobbly.

“I see.” He herded a confused Blurr deeper into his lab, yellow optic strangely bright. “We can confirm the presence of a newspark now, and lay any doubt to rest.” The statement was spoken in Shockwave’s usual accented monotone, but his EM field was not so controlled. Blurr was drowned in a wave of eager interest and excitement -something really had to be wrong with Shockwave- while he was guided to a flat table.

“Erf-!” Blurr’s vocalizer popped, spitting static when Shockwave grasped him by the hip plating and lifted him and Wheelie onto the table with ease. Shockwave took Wheelie, which gave Blurr a little rush of anxiety, but all he did was hold the sparkling against his chest while his servo waved a scanner over Blurr’s blue abdomen. A screen beside the table flickered to life as it received the results from the scanner, revealing a clear image of a rippling ball of silver protometal. It was no larger than the racer’s thumb, and seemed to continuously fold over and in on itself like an unending wave.

“The development and presence of malleable protometal is the first stage of the gestation process, as it can only occur when a newspark has formed within the spark chamber. I am not surprised you were unaware of its existence; it is still in an unstable state, and will not alert your internal systems that a viable frame is under construction until it has solidified.” Shockwave explained while they both watched the screen. Blurr lifted a servo and pressed it to his abdominal plating, his optics wide.

“Unstable so do you mean it’s not viable but it’s right there does that mean something’s wrong-”

Shockwave tilted his blocky helm, considering. “It is likely fine, as it takes several deca-cycles for the protometal to settle.” His monotone voice trailed off slightly, like he wanted to add more.

“Isn't there another way to check to be double-triple-sure everything is okay it seems unwise not to check and make sure-”

The eagerness in Shockwave’s EM field intensified, though his outward composure remained neutral. “My scanners cannot penetrate the shielding around spark chambers and I cannot assess the health of the newspark without a visual. If you were to open your chamber, then the strength and color of the newspark could be observed.”

Blurr only hesitated for a nano-sec before he complied. It was nothing Shockwave hadn’t already seen, he reasoned. He fidgeted in place while his chassis split open, pedes kicking where they dangled off the table.

Bathed in the deep blue glow of Blurr’s spark, Shockwave’s helm bent closer. Blurr saw his first glimpse of the newspark orbiting in his chassis as a reflection in the glass of the scientist’s yellow optic. Bright white and yet so small. The newspark was practically haywire, zipping wildly around Blurr’s large spark. His optics had no trouble tracking its hyper movements, but Shockwave struggled; he had to turn his helm with every move.

“Incredible.” Shockwave murmured. His large servo reached to cup the outside of Blurr’s chassis carefully, almost reverent.

“It’s-so-fast-! It’s just like me is that normal I hope it’s normal I don’t want it to not be normal-”

“It is rare,” Shockwave answered, almost absent-minded while he tore his gaze away from Blurr’s spark to look at his face plates. The purple servo on Blurr’s side turned from cupping to caressing. “But it is not a defect. It will not hinder the newspark’s development.”

The strength of Shockwave’s interest was palpable, heavy and buzzing in the air as his EM field filled the room. Blurr’s circuits tingled from it and the gears in his legs clicked back and forth nervously. Shockwave bent closer, and-

And then had to jerk back when Wheelie let out two audial piercing shrieks and tried to launch himself at Blurr’s open chassis, his wide optics locked on his carrier’s shining spark.

Once his chest plates were closed and a wriggly Wheelie was again in his grasp, Blurr stared at Shockwave, shrewd narrow optics squinting while he frowned. Shockwave bore the scrutiny without comment. His oversized finials were over-active; performing odd combinations of flaps and twitches, flaring out and snapping back in occasionally. Blurr hadn’t known many mechs with finials but he’d heard that they were somewhat like doorwings; they had their own language. The most obvious comparison that came to

processor was Optimus, but Blurr hadn't known the Prime closely, and his final gestures had always been subdued and reserved.

"There's something wrong with you I know it-I know it I know something is off what is it huh-" He burst, "And why'd you kick me and Wheelie out after making such a big deal about keeping us locked up it's-not-adding-up it doesn't make sense-"

Shockwave's final went still, thinking, then flapped out wide and wiggled.

"I sustained injuries as a result of the merge-"

"What?!" Blurr cried, leaning forward and placing his servos on Shockwave's wide chest.

"You got hurt but how and are you okay-"

"-I am fully repaired and functional now." Shockwave's blunt statement cut into Blurr's rambling, his helm tilting to stare curiously at Blurr's servos. The courier jumped back, embarrassed that he'd felt concern in the first place. "But it was logical to release you while I was indisposed, since you seem to be incompatible with incarceration and would have offlined if your spark was subjected to another overcharge. And-" The Decepticon stared at him consideringly. "Your continued functioning was... desired."

Thrown by the last comment, Blurr's intake twitched for several long moments but no words came out. Shockwave moved away from the table and turned to get something from a nearby shelf and Blurr watched him, almost dazed, while his servo rose to press to his windshield over his spark.

Blurr had two sparklings now. The revelation was just as shocking as the first one had been back in the mass transit system tunnel. Except now this one was also *Shockwave's*. He wasn't sure what to think or feel about that because on one servo he hated the mech and hated everything he'd done that had caused Blurr to lose his friends, but on the other servo he kind-of-maybe-sort-of enjoyed the other mech's company. However, that *could* just be because he was one of the only other living mechanisms on the planet that wasn't either: old-as-scrap and possibly dead, a seeker, or a sparkling. Well- Shockwave was old for sure -the vastness of his memories and the strangeness of the golden Cybertronian cities Blurr had seen within them were proof of that- but he wasn't *Alpha Trion* old.

And he was -Blurr looked at the Decepticon's broad purple backplates- not unattractive. In fact, if you held Blurr at blaster-point and forced him to admit it he might say Shockwave was handsome. He was an attractive mystery and Blurr couldn't help but want to figure out more, to understand those strange memories he had seen. And now he had the time and freedom to do so, all because of the fluttery newspark in his chassis. Blurr was sure Shockwave didn't want *him* around for no reason or some slag 'desire' excuse. He definitely wanted the newspark and Blurr was going to exploit that to get as much freedom, time, and fuel as he could.

"So I can stay out now you're not going to throw me back in a cell are-you-are-you because then I'd get overcharged and that would hurt the newspark and then we'd both offline but you wouldn't-want-that-to-happen-would-you so *logically* you have to keep me outside but what if I need your help or something happens then I can come back here right it'd really be the

best choice to let me come back more often and leave when I need to so that's what you're going to do right-?"

Shockwave watched him speak with a strange attentiveness. No bot ever listened to Blurr go on like that. Usually he got at least two sentences out before being told to be quiet, spoken over, or in some cases completely ignored.

When he finished talking something was pressed into his servos -energon supplements for the sparkling, he realized- and a ping appeared on his HUD with a comm code. Shockwave's comm code.

"I agree. Your suggested course of action would be..." Shockwave went completely still where he stood, looking down at Blurr. His field was a mess of intense emotions too conflicting to understand. "Logical."

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Smoke and ash whirled up into the air as thick acid rain clouds parted over sector fourteen in the ruins of Polyhex. A long and twisted-thin ship slid, undetected, past holographic projectors and feeble automated security systems, through the atmosphere until it touched down on the ravaged surface. Inside, the pilot grinned and looked back to the Judge behind him, glad to see his superior's good mood as he informed him of their successful infiltration.

"What ruin!" The Judge cried, looking at the barren landscape. A *click-whirr* of a changing faceplate was audible, and then, "I hope they are all dead."

Chapter End Notes

I've been getting so frustrated lately, I feel like the characterization is not right or good and it's bugging me so bad.

The last part: of course I gotta throw in some quintessons ;P they are the perfect plot device.

Also!! The new sparkling is actually going to be a G1 character, kudos to whoever can figure out which one. I got two hints:

1. it's a character associated w/ Blurr in G1, though they are not exactly cybertronian
2. i've mentioned the character's name in this chapter :)

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“There is a way out of every box, a solution to every puzzle; it’s just a matter of finding it.”

-Star Trek

Consciousness came to her slowly, a creeping crawl of mechanisms activating within her frame until her optics online to see Hadeen’s pink dawn and the sides of Firestar’s red truck bed above her. A sense of calm slipped like a cascade of miniature shimmering stars across her circuit board and she basked in its temporary relief until a rough servo slapped her cheek plate.

“Augh-!” Lancer spluttered, her large frame jolting. Chromia’s dirty face appeared above her.

“My bad.” She said gruffly, giving Lancer a softer pat to the backplates as she sat up. “Thought I took you out of stasis wrong.”

“I don’t think slapping is a cure to stasis lock, Chromia.” Greenlight huffed, her familiar servos already smoothing over Lancer’s shoulders.

Chromia crossed her arms. “It’s worked before-”

“Can you all stop bickering and *get off of me*.” Firestar griped. She sounded exhausted and Lancer couldn’t blame her for being irritated. She was the only one of them that had to actually work during the past five quartexes. To save energon, Lancer and Greenlight were placed into an easily reversible fuel-conserving stasis lock and stashed in Firestar’s truck bed with Elita One’s comatose frame. Only Chromia had stayed online to help watch for threats and give directions as they travelled to Alpha Trion’s base.

Speaking of travelling, Lancer took a look at their surroundings once she got her pedes on the ground.

Helex. She’d seen it once before, a long time ago when she’d been young and naïve, trying to become an archivist despite the way her frame had predestined her for labor work. Her mentor had assigned her a task to retrieve some important texts from the Helex southern archival stores, and she’d been made a fool when she found out that the texts had been made up. Her ‘mentor’ and his archivist colleagues had thought it’d be funny to send the dumb

construction bot on a wild copper-goose chase to get rid of her. Because, of course, she'd never be able to become a *real* archivist.

Lancer sighed and let the old frustration go. No point in getting upset over it now.

The scenery back then had been interesting, at least. Southern architecture was drastically different from the northern cities she'd lived in; tall, sharp, visually intimidating, and *vast*. It had been bustling with bots of all frame types and functions from fliers to minibots that she'd struggled to avoid crushing under her pedes. It didn't look anything like that anymore. What she saw now more closely resembled a trash dump than a city, its buildings were completely decimated and crumbled close to the metallic planet's surface.

Chromia brought out the holo-map and frowned at it while Firestar gratefully slumped over on the ground and dropped into recharge. Greenlight, unsurprisingly, had slunk off to investigate their surroundings. Lancer's brow ridge knitted and her spark ached. She had been distant from her lately, but Lancer tried not to feel hurt by it. She tried to give her support while also giving her space to grieve for their lost teammates- they had all been through a lot, and had lost a lot. Greenlight probably just needed some time to herself, Lancer reasoned.

"Lancer." Chromia barked, half-commanding and half exhausted. "You're good with maps and all that slag, right? Can you figure out why the GPS is acting up?"

Eager to help, Lancer took the GPS and hunched over it. Her orange servos dwarfed the sleek little bit of tech as she manipulated buttons and dials.

"It looks like the coordinates are missing some information, maybe they got corrupted while Elita One was transmitting them to you, so they're leading us to a broader area rather than a specific one. I might be able to pinpoint an exact location if I just..." Lancer trailed off, absorbed in her work, and if Chromia said anything in reply, it went unheard. Calculations danced across her processor while she worked as easily as if she had been constructed to do them. Which would be incorrect. Lancer had studied very hard- had clawed her way through learning modules and hoarded any scraps of information she could find- just to possess the skill and knowledge that came to her then.

"There," She smiled, handing back the GPS that now pointed to sector three of downtown Helex. The stress on Chromia's face eased slightly.

"Good work." The older femme praised, and Lancer flushed, her chest plates puffing with pride. "Guess we just need to wait for Greenlight to get back before we can head out."

Which would be a while. Greenlight took scouting seriously and she wasn't as quick at it as Moonracer and Blurr had been, so she tended to be away for joors before returning. Lancer wasn't too concerned; it was unlikely anything would happen given that there were no other mechanisms living on this side of the planet.

Since being in an induced stasis was nothing like a good old, natural recharge cycle, Lancer settled down beside Elita One and Firestar's prone forms and let herself drift off, trusting that Chromia would wake her when she was needed.

She was walking, that was all she really knew. The methodical pounding of her heavy pedes into the iron ground was steadfast and purposeful as she passed through a city of tall spires and long shadows. Ahead of her was Hadeen, fat and red on the horizon. A smaller femme frame was also walking in front of her, both she and the sun were perfectly in line with one another as if they were forming a constellation. Lancer followed unquestioningly, instinctively knowing that she needed to go where the femme was leading.

They walked and walked and time seemed to fold on itself, splitting and jumping forward to show her important landmarks: an old temple to Primus, a highway that led underground, a service tunnel that ran deep. The femme was always at least ten steps ahead no matter how Lancer quickened her pace. Around them, the tunnel Lancer had been led to grew damp with acid and wet copper, dark pink energon pipelines thrummed above her helm, nestled deep inside ancient wiring.

A doorway appeared before them and the femme abruptly stopped and spun on her heels to look at Lancer.

“You’re a much better listener!” Moonracer chirped, smiling and bouncing on her pedes.

Lancer tried to run forward, surprise and happiness rushing through her as she went to hug her friend, but her knee joints locked up against her will and kept her rooted to the ground.

“Nuh-uh! You need to stay on track. We’ll see each other soon, I promise!” Moonracer tutted and moved to the side to let Lancer see through the doorway. “You need to *remember* this.”

At the end of the room beyond the doorway was a massive wall of wiring and exposed circuitry. It throbbed and pulsed in time with the energon pipeline in the ceiling, and embedded in the center of the wall was a Cybertronian frame. Entranced, Lancer approached slowly, closer till she could see more of the archaic femme frame in the wall. Her green plating was chipped and worn and she was missing the entire lower half of her body from the waist down. Her major artery tubes were woven into the wall, braided and curled from her body to keep her functioning.

The femme raised her creaking helm to reveal her heavily lined face plates. She lifted a servo out to Lancer, blue optics boring into the large femme as if she could see into her very spark.

Inside her palm, offered up like a gift, was a golden key.

Joors later, while the Autobots closed in on Alpha Trion's coordinates, Lancer remembered her strange recharge fluxes.

She puzzled over them so intensely that she missed Alpha Trion emerging from his base, which turned out to be underground, beneath a garbage landfill. After verifying their identities with Chromia the old mech ushered them into a hidden lift. Privately, Lancer was starstruck by the frail little mech that fretted over Elita One's comatose frame like a worried creator, his spindly fingers and thin servos twitching and fiddling with concern. Here was the *oldest* living Cybertronian and Lancer was brimming with curiosity about him. He had lived through so much; he was practically a walking history datapad.

She had no doubt in her spark or processor that he could fix their leader, and was content to sit on the sidelines with Firestar and Greenlight while Chromia explained what had happened. Alpha Trion listened without comment as he gently pried open Elita's internals to assess the damage. His lipplates twisted down.

"I see." He said, gravely, while stroking the –kind of weird looking, in Lancer's opinion-facial adornment on his chin. "I must do a full diagnostic assessment. Please, there is a habsuite and fueling station just through that door, avail yourselves while I work."

Firestar, Greenlight, and Lancer left at the elder's request but Chromia lingered. Her blue optics stayed glued to Elita until Firestar forcibly dragged her away.

Lancer was dazzled by Alpha Trion's base. One entire room was a library filled with stacks upon stacks of datapads and documents. Greenlight watched her, affectionately amused as Lancer hovered in front of the shelves. Her large frame scrunched down, arms held close to her chassis in order to avoid knocking anything over, too intimidated to touch anything but determined to see everything she could.

Things went like that for a while: Lancer and Greenlight exploring, Firestar napping, and Chromia pacing until Alpha Trion emerged.

"I cannot repair Elita One." He said and Lancer's spark went cold. The Autobots all spoke at once, disbelief and anger lashing out in their EM fields.

"What?"

"But you know everything!"

"She's not getting worse, there must be a way to repair her-"

Chromia's outrage was the strongest. "Elita One thought- no, she *knew* you could help her. She placed her trust in you, we all did. We came all the way here just for you to tell us you can't repair her?" she scoffed, "I guess that trust was misguided."

Alpha Trion straightened. In the blink of an optic he somehow went from a weary old creator, distraught over his creation, to an ancient leader, firm and unbreaking in the face of dissent. The Autobots were instantly cowed except for Chromia, who stubbornly crossed her arms across her chassis.

“*Listen.*” He intoned, “At the beginning of the war I was the one to reformat Ariel into who she is now: *Elita One*. I know her every circuit, design characteristic, and *flaw*. She is my creation and I would repair her immediately, were it possible. During her reformatting I had to make do with limited materials and as such her parts are outdated and rare. I warned her not to use her temporal abilities, as they place a great strain upon her spark.” Alpha Trion sighed. “Her spark is now nearly depleted, reduced to a fraction of the mass that it should have and mere energon cannot replenish it. What she requires is a specific type of electrical energy from another living mechanism to jumpstart her healing process and replenish what she lost, but her hardline interface array is only compatible with one other mech.”

“Who?” Chromia asked, voice sharp.

“My other creation.” Alpha Trion’s voice took on a mourning note. “Optimus Prime.”

Firestar gasped and Lancer sighed in defeat. Chromia grit her denta and hissed. “Damn you to *Unicron*. He might as well be offline.” There was no chance they’d find Optimus Prime in time to help Elita, and they’d already wasted so much time just getting to Alpha Trion.

“There is no other option? No way to alter her frame to hardline with another mechanism?” Chromia pressed.

Alpha Trion shook his helm. “I can do nothing more for her, but there may be one way to save her still.”

The ancient mech rushed to a side table cluttered with data pads and removed one, quickly bringing up an image. “In times long before any of you were even base codes in the Well, there was a way to create and repair mechs by going directly and petitioning help from the most powerful source of creation on our planet: the mind of Primus itself, *Vector Sigma*.”

Lancer shot upright and gasped; optics locked on the pad screen. The golden key from her dream!

“I know that! I’ve seen it before-”

Alpha Trion looked at her very closely, uncannily similar to the femme from her night flux. “Where did you see the Key, young one?”

“In a dream. I was travelling- Moonracer led me through... well, it looked like the outskirts of Vos. There was a bot hidden underground, she was green and had that key.”

Chromia looked skeptical. “A dream? I don’t think-”

“No, no,” Alpha Trion shushed Chromia, who glared at him. His optics were wide. “A green femme? It cannot be...”

“What can’t be?” Firestar piped up, beside her Greenlight had gone stiff.

“The Key to Vector Sigma is the only way to access the supercomputer’s power, it was entrusted long ago to a companion of mine after the Rebellion.” *Rebellion?* Lancer saved the word as note to ask the mech about later, “Beta disappeared in order to keep the Key hidden

and safe, even from me. There is no way you could know of her, unless she wishes to be found now.”

“Tell me-” Alpha Trion placed the entire weight of his attention on Lancer. “Did your dream show you a path? A way to Beta?”

Lancer opened her intake to respond but Firestar beat her to the punch.

“Primus below,” She whined, “Please don’t tell me I have to drive across the planet *again*.”

--

Shockwave was distracted once more by the security feed on the screen to the left of his workstation. Blurr’s sleek altmode skid to a halt as he transformed and peered curiously at some decrepit old store in a downtown block of Iacon. On screen, the racer had one servo pressed to his chassis while his intake moved a mile a klik. There was no audio but Shockwave knew the mech was talking to the newspark in his spark chamber. Shockwave was loath to admit it, but he found it was an... *endearing* habit Blurr had developed as of late.

Shockwave also hated to admit to himself that he was irrefutably, illogically, ridiculously compromised.

Emotion was becoming more commonplace to him, and the progress he’d made on restoring his suppressant protocols was nonexistent. His productivity had dropped to an unacceptably low level yet he could not seem to find any willpower to do something about it. He had thrown out all of his carefully laid plans and barriers as soon as Blurr had appeared in his lab.

He let the courier do as he pleased, coming and going from the tower whenever he desired, and *Shockwave* was pleased with how frequently Blurr chose to keep him company. He had to keep tight control of his own behavior whenever the racer was near lest he cave to the foreign desires poisoning his processor. But, no matter how torturous it was to repress his newfound emotions, Shockwave could not bring himself to stop the interactions.

He enjoyed the company, simply put. Blurr was not unintelligent and was surprisingly pleasant to converse with, though he could talk for joors if given the leeway. Which Shockwave often gave because the endless rambling was... attractive, at times.

Reluctantly, Shockwave forced himself to focus back on the task at servo. He needed to finish his space bridge. It had to be completed within the next few deca-cycles if he was going to stay on schedule with his plans. It was imperative that he finish the space bridge.

A memory of Blurr's visit from earlier that same cycle, when he'd dropped off Wheelie, played in his processor. Blurr's racer frame apparently required regular upkeep in the form of an intensive strut stretching routine. A routine he had decided to perform in the lab, that involved twisting and bending himself into the most obscene poses Shockwave had ever beheld.

The space bridge schematics sat untouched on the screen.

Frustrated and unused to dealing with frustration in general, Shockwave turned off his console and stared blankly at the dark screen for a breem. He was nearly grateful when Wheelie started crying from his play enclosure and swiftly went to his sparkling.

"You require something?" Shockwave knelt next to the low wall where Wheelie was banging his servos, wailing. "You must use your words."

Recently, Shockwave had been attempting to expand the youngling's vocabulary. They were currently working on 'Energon'.

After excessive glaring and grumbling, Wheelie worked out something that sounded like 'gergon', which, Shockwave supposed sounded similar enough to 'Energon' that he decided to reward it by plucking Wheelie from the pen and walking to the energon dispenser.

Wheelie chose to be difficult and refused the bottled energon. Shockwave attempted spoon-feeding, which was also rejected. He tried to get Wheelie to refuel with no success for nearly a joor before he contacted Blurr.

:: Blurr. ::

The response was immediate.

:: Shockwave! Is something wrong did something happen what do you need is it Wheelie-you're not comming me because you've been spying on me again are you-are you because I told you I only tried to eat that expired energon goodie once and it's not even that bad for the newspark and-::

:: Wheelie is rejecting both bottle and utensil fed energon and requires your presence. There is no other immediate concern to distress yourself over.::

:: Oh well why didn't you just say that first thing okay-okay I'll be there in just a klik you know I bet I could beat my top record this time you know you better be timing this because I'm about to get there so-fast-::

True to his comm, it seemed as though one moment Shockwave's lab was empty, and the next the courier was zipping in, a gust of wind brought with him from the speed of his steps.

"89.65 Astro-seconds." Shockwave stated. The courier blinked at him, confused for a moment, before a smile appeared on his lips. Shockwave could not contain his own pleased finial wiggle at the reaction.

“I was only point-one-five Astro-seconds off from beating my goal this time but if you factor in that I was further away than usual then technically-speaking I did beat it and I would have passed it if not for-” Blurr paused his rambling when he took Wheelie and plopped down into a nearby console chair with an uncharacteristic yawn. “-if not for this newspark draining me you know I think it may be faster than even me with the way it’s been moving I think it’ll be a racer like me it’s got to be there’s no way it’d be some-slow-gunformer-no-offense but it’s unlikely that-”

Shockwave sat in a chair next to Blurr and listened with half an audial. Blurr’s servos were an entertaining flurry of motion as he tried to simultaneously open the feeding tube panel on his chassis while also narrating his rant with expressive servo movements. Wheelie calmed when he latched onto the tube, all traces of his earlier foul mood vanishing. His tiny helm was comfortably propped on the lower half of Blurr’s windshield, optics blinking sluggishly in a refuel-induced daze.

He wasn’t the only one on the verge of recharge. Blurr slumped in his chair and yawned again, endearing as he kept jerking awake every few moments to mumble out a sentence or two. It spoke to how common this type of situation had become that when Blurr finally did drop into recharge, Shockwave merely pulled out a mesh blanket he’d started storing in one of his worktable compartments and draped it over the napping carrier and creation. He tucked one edge of the mesh under the courier’s chin guard, then faltered when Blurr shifted closer in his recharge, pressing his white cheek into Shockwave’s palm.

For a while he was frozen, staring down at the sight. Fear gripped him when he realized he had lost control of the situation; he never lost control of anything. And yet there he was, overcome with desire, affection, and longing that he did not want nor need. He did not know what he was doing.

Truthfully, what scared him the deepest was the realization that he was not actually afraid of the loss of control. He was scared because of how natural the loss felt. How natural it was to *feel*.

It was a slow, gradual process but Shockwave felt his struts relax when he surrendered himself to the feeling. He knew, logically, that it was too immense to fight anymore.

He felt strangely settled when he went back to his work with the courier’s noisy cooling fans roaring at his side.

--

“-And this is the habsuite though you probably already knew that since I know you have the schematics of this place because you’re creepy but this is how I’ve decorated it so far just – watch-watch-watch-your-step!– it’s disorganized right now it’s not always messy like this but Wheelie learned how to crawl up the stairs with his toys last deca-cycle so it’s been difficult to-”

Shockwave stepped carefully into the habsuite, observing the room and lingering on things like Blurr's recharge mat and the drawings Wheelie had scribbled on one of the walls with an interested finial twitch. Blurr didn't know why the scientist was interested in seeing his bar but he'd accidentally offered to show the purple mech around and he couldn't exactly take the offer back.

A strut in Blurr's lower backplates twinged and he immediately stretched to relieve it, his arms raised above his helm while he twisted and sighed in relief. He looked back at Shockwave to find that the mech was watching him, the habsuite forgotten in favor of ogling the new miniscule bump in Blurr's stomach plating.

Shifting from pede to pede with flustered energy underneath that yellow gaze, Blurr babbled, "But I think we've seen everything now yes everything why don't we go down and I can show you some bartender tricks and now that you're here I can actually use them to make you a drink so-come-on-lets-go-" He ran an impatient loop around the scientist then sprinted down to the bar. Shockwave was slow so Blurr had all of his ingredients pulled out by the time he arrived.

"Oh-be-careful-watch-out-for-!"

Wheelie, now in his newly-accessible and *tiny* car altmode, barreled at full speed into the gunformer's leg and crashed with an audible *clang*. The impact was jarring enough to cause the sparkling to transform back to his rootmode.

Shockwave bent to pick him up but Wheelie righted himself and crawled away, laughing and already fixated on his next target (a toy seeker, suspiciously similar to Starscream, that had a denta-bite mark on one of its miniature wings) on the other side of the bar room. Blurr swore that Wheelie's helm was made of extra-durable steel with the way he seemed to crash into everything and then wander off without batting an optic.

"Resilience is an advantageous trait for a young Decepticon to possess." Shockwave commented as he sat at the bar top. Blurr scowled.

"Don't get started on this again you know it's also an advantage for an Autobot but you don't hear me going on-and-on about that every cycle now do you-" Blurr aggressively opened a container of high-grade. Mentions of the Decepticon's plans for Wheelie still put him on edge, and Shockwave had become annoyingly persistent about getting Blurr to agree with him. "Now watch this-"

Blurr had snooped through several old bars across Iacon, pilfering their energon cellars (there hadn't been much) and recipe datapads for the past quartex. It was a fun hobby even if he couldn't taste any of the drinks to see how good he was at mixing them.

Lancer used to have a holovid collection that she would bust out for rare team-bonding evenings, and one movie that'd stuck with him had featured a suave, attractive red speedster bartender. Blurr drew inspiration from the recording he'd made of that holovid and tried to emulate it. He wanted to be entertaining and charismatic and- and *admired*. He couldn't deny that it was thrilling to capture Shockwave's attention, no matter how he shied from it whenever it got too intense, he couldn't help but want it back again once it was gone.

Shockwave had no reaction to his energon mixing display. His EM field was pulled in tight and he sat motionless on the bar stool. Blurr felt a little ridiculous flipping bottles around so he cut his routine short and poured the mixture into a cube in front of Shockwave.

Both the scientist and the courier stared at the cube on the table in silence for a klik. Blurr had a minor processor meltdown when he remembered *Shockwave didn't have an intake*. He probably took his energon through injections or something and-and-and-

Shockwave grasped the cube suddenly, his grip tight to the point Blurr could hear the plexi-glass creak, and lifted it to his neck cabling. He tipped his blocky helm back toward the ceiling and his neck partially transformed to allow his intake tube to pop out. The entire mixture was downed in one go.

"It is adequate." He commented, vocalizer rougher than usual when his neck cabling resealed itself.

Blurr had a million questions.

He remembered the memory he'd seen in Shockwave's spark. He hadn't wanted to pry into it the past few deca-cycles but it had been so-so intense that he couldn't forget it. It would have felt cruel to make him relive it by asking him about it, asking him *why*, no matter how curious Blurr was. He figured that the helm in the box was Shockwave's helm though the realization had felt strange since he considered Shockwave's not-face to be, well, *his face*. Blurr couldn't imagine him with an actual nasal ridge or intake or two optics. But still, Blurr didn't think anyone -Decepticon or otherwise- deserved to have their helm removed. Or to wake like that afterward...

Abruptly, Blurr asked. "Can you taste it like that-?"

Shockwave stiffened. He seemed to weigh Blurr carefully before responding. "Taste is a muted sensation, but it is present."

Blurr hummed, optics flicking around as a couple of ideas bounced in his processor. That made sense, and he knew Shockwave couldn't smell, so he wouldn't care for drinks with subtle flavors or faint aromas...

"What-about-temperature-huh was it too cold too hot not enough or in between because I can tweak that-" Blurr dug through his ingredients with a new mission pinned to his HUD.

"Ah... Warmed would be preferable." Shockwave murmured, leaning subtly to watch Blurr rummage under the counter.

He had to go off of bottle label descriptions of flavors, since he couldn't taste anything -he was tempted to try sticking his glossa into a few but he knew that'd earn him an audial-full from Shockwave- but he'd found one high grade brand that promised 'a savory, deep flavor' without being obnoxiously sweet or sour. A klik later and he'd whipped up a mix, setting the new slightly-warm cube in front of the other mech.

With caution, Shockwave took the new drink and opened his neck cabling once more. This time Blurr got the reaction he'd wanted. Shockwave shivered –a visible, full frame shake- and his EM field broadened, drenching Blurr with his surprise and pleasure.

"I've not tasted like this in..." Shockwave trailed off, uncertain.

"Want-another-one-? Obviously I can't drink any and otherwise it'll go to waste-"

Shockwave, surprisingly, accepted, and what started out as one extra drink turned into two, then four, and then eight as the evening cycle went on. Blurr only grew cautious when he got to twelve, and started eyeing the warframe with concern.

"I think-that's-enough-for-you-actually-" He swiped back the thirteenth cube and dumped it down the sink.

"Illogical. My frame is far larger than the miniscule Autobots you are accustomed to fueling with." his finials flapped out in comical offense. "As such, I am capable of imbibing more than what you would perceive to be enough."

"Sure-sure-sure-" Blurr casually pushed the bottle of high grade further down the countertop, out of Shockwave's overcharged and clumsy grasp. "And careful what you say I'm one of those so-called miniscule Autobots myself you know and-"

A loud cracking noise sounded from the other side of the room and both mechs turned to see what'd happened. Wheelie screamed joyfully while he ripped another decorative panel from the bottom of the wall with a loud *crack*. Blurr rolled his optics.

"I doubt the owner of this establishment would be pleased with its current state, if he were able to see it now." Shockwave commented, still watching Wheelie as the sparkling tossed the panels across the floor, shrieking with glee whenever they split apart.

"He's most-probably-definitely-offline now so it's not like his opinion matters." Blurr huffed, setting down a cube he'd started cleaning, "Why do you say that though did you know him or something if you did then that must have been forever ago-"

"Not personally." Shockwave's optic dimmed as he accessed old memory files. "I frequented this bar on rare occasions. Mostly for matters pertaining to the Decepticons. It was once moderately popular."

Intrigued by the glimpse into the past, Blurr leaned over the counter eagerly, optics wide.

"*Really* -? What was it like was it noisy were there a lot of bots was it expensive I-bet-it-was-what kind of drinks did they serve what was the bartender like-?" Shockwave's optic flickered in surprise at the verbal barrage.

His single purple servo tapped a digit idly on the counter while he considered his response. "The proprietor was unusually accepting of warframes, though the drinks were unpleasant and the staff was insufferable."

Blurr went around the counter to pick up a cube that'd fallen from Shockwave's side earlier. "That doesn't sound completely pleasant and if it wasn't pleasant I'm surprised anyone would have come -I certainly wouldn't have- but if there were still bots around now then it would be nice if I kept this place and fixed it up because it would be much-much-much better my way don't you think-?"

Straightening from where he'd crouched, one servo braced on his midsection for balance, Blurr found himself face-to-optic with Shockwave. He looked down at Blurr. His frame was so massive he could still tower over him while sitting. Heat shot through Blurr's circuits as Shockwave's helm jerked clumsily to let his optic run across his frame. Shockwave's EM field fell heavy over the room, thick with blatant appreciation.

"Indeed." Shockwave rasped, leaning closer, his gun-arm braced on the countertop. "May I?"

Blurr blinked rapidly before he looked down and realized Shockwave's servo was hovering over his own on his stomach plating. He resisted the urge to bounce from pede to pede nervously, and in lieu of a verbal response he grabbed the larger servo and pressed it to his midsection, thrilled by the awe and wonder that spread over him from the larger mech's EM field. Shockwave's warm palm nearly engulfed the front of his entire waist.

He caressed his plating, covetous. Blurr couldn't help but sway closer when wandering fingers moved from the tiny bump to his windshield, tracing the transformation seams over his spark, and then, to Blurr's surprise, rising higher to brush the curve of his crest and send shivers down his spinal strut. The newspark sang in his chassis, excitedly bouncing from the proximity to Shockwave's spark.

"Sh-S-S-" Blurr looped, optics wide as a purple servo cupped one of his cheeks. His whole vision turned yellow from the brightness of Shockwave's gaze.

Suddenly, Shockwave stood and swept his gun-arm out as if to pull Blurr close, but the racer slipped from his grasp and retreated because of-

"No-no-no- wait Shockwave don't-!"

With the change in position the energon in Shockwave's fuel lines shifted, hitting his processor all at once with the strength of the high grade he'd consumed, and he promptly fell backward like a stiff steel construction beam. Both Blurr and Wheelie -who had been startled by the loud thud- rushed to Shockwave's side.

"What-a-bolts-for-brains-huh-Wheelie-Wheelie and remember how he was going on about being able to handle it not one-breem-ago-?" Wheelie looked up at him, not understanding a single word. Quickly, before Wheelie could start gnawing on some part of Shockwave's unconscious frame, Blurr wiggled his servos under the purple mech's shoulder pauldrons and attempted to lift him. It took at least a joor and a half, but in the end he was able to drag him to the lift that was barely used since Blurr preferred the stairs and *hated* waiting.

Once on the second floor Blurr dragged him to the hab and left him on the recharge mat, which looked ridiculous underneath his gigantic frame. Fans blasting from exertion, he stood

over Shockwave and winced, a servo on his own chassis. The newspark felt uncomfortably warm most of the time but now it burned like a little electrical fire. A hyperactive electrical fire.

“*Haywire*- ” He whined, a designation he’d come up with for the newspark and had kept to himself so far. Even though he knew the newspark couldn’t hear or understand him, he swore he could feel the tiniest pulse of *something* from the spark nestled next to his own before it settled down. It was nice when Haywire was calm, and ‘calm’ as in pulsing to Blurr’s rapid sparkbeat and not to its own even wilder one. It was nice to have someone so close- he never felt lonely nowadays.

Blurr looked consideringly at Shockwave, his servo moving to pluck and fidget with the Autobrand magnetized to his chassis.

He never felt lonely...

Chapter End Notes

a silly fluffy half-filler chapter before things get crazy. I just felt like doing every self-indulgent scene that came to mind, except I did have a "there's only one bed" scene planned but I couldn't get it to fit lol. I was rewatching cyberverso too and omg... shockwave.... <333, it miiight have influenced this chapter a lot.

Beta is my absolute favorite female transformer i love her voice n i've been waiting sooo long to write a scene w/ her in it.

[https://tfwiki.net/wiki/Haywire_\(Targetmaster\)](https://tfwiki.net/wiki/Haywire_(Targetmaster)) try to tell me he is not the perfect shockblurr baby 🙄

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“They knew well enough what was happening. But even to themselves they pretended that all was well, for the food was good, they were protected, they had nothing to fear but the one fear.”

-Watership Down

Shockwave looked up from his datapad filled with schematics as Blurr rushed to meet him. The air outside was frigid, mostly due to the acid rain storms that had become more frequent as Cybertron continued to decay rapidly, but it was even colder in the shadow of the half-constructed space bridge where he stood overseeing his project. Blurr was hot- steam rose from his shiny blue plating while his shapely chassis heaved. The soft swell of the courier's midsection caught Shockwave's attention, and he blatantly studied the sharp edges and curves of Blurr's frame without reservation or shame.

“Wow-this-thing-is-big I don't know what it could be I don't even know where to start guessing but I know you won't answer if I ask it'll just be *'It's-not-for-you-to-know'* like you always say you never tell me anything that's going on and I don't understand the secrecy since it's not like I'm going to tell anyone else because who else is there to tell-” Blurr had not even looked at the scientist yet, his helm was tilted back to stare at the space bridge while he spoke.

“It is a prototype of an intergalactic transportation system, which I call a *space bridge*.”

Blurr's helm whipped to stare at him in surprise. A nano-sec pause and then Blurr was upon him, servos gripping the arm that held the schematics, leaning in close to Shockwave's frame.

Just the reaction Shockwave had anticipated.

“An intergalactic-transport-system-! That's-amazing-that's-incredible-that's impossible-impossible! You mean it could bring off planet materials here could it bring energon here could it take us off Cybertron if it could then we could leave without even building a ship and then we could find someplace better and-”

“-It is not impossible.” He pulled Blurr closer to his frame as subtly as he was able, satisfied when the warm line of Blurr’s form pressed against his colder one. “Once functional, the space bridge will allow for the instantaneous transport of energon and other raw materials. I’ve not yet tested whether living mechanisms could be safely moved, but my calculations predict a 59.70% likelihood of success if attempted.” A falsity, his calculations were closer to 96.89%, but he kept that information to himself.

Blurr babbled on after that, rapidly expressing daydreams and new hopes for relocating to Velocitron or some such colony. He let Blurr go on as he quietly led them both away from the construction site.

Shockwave had no intention of allowing any of the living mechanisms currently on Cybertron to leave, much less the one he currently had at his side. No, Blurr would not be leaving.

His acceptance of his newfound emotions had given him clarity and a new goal: to make Blurr *his*, in any and every way possible. He found new motivation to finish his projects and had even seen a 70% increase in his productivity. The only unfortunate side effect was the... frustration –he believed it was that– which plagued him now. Frustration with the slow-going progress of his projects despite his full effort, paired with frustration of a foreign and far more physical nature. One that had him rutting into his own servo in the privacy of his seldom-used habsuite, spike throbbing while he imagined Blurr’s lithe frame in his arms.

It was inconvenient, and -he turned his helm to look down at Blurr’s vibrant facial expressions while he ranted- it was also difficult to control.

The courier shied from Shockwave’s touch whenever he grew too blatant, skittish as a cyber-horse and just as skilled at evading his grasp. He had to be careful, *slow*, ironically, if he wanted Blurr to truly be his. And slow he had been despite his newborn desire. Patience had, of course, been ingrained into a large portion of his original personality programming. Any mechanism created for what he had been created for required it if they were intended to function longer than a deca-cycle.

The journey back to his laboratory was purposefully made slower by his own sedate pede steps, a calculated action that resulted in Blurr writhing with impatience. Every restless bounce added to the courier’s steps made his plating brush enjoyably against Shockwave’s side. The sensation was meticulously recorded and saved in the scientist’s memory bank.

Wheelie did not require their attention when they returned. In fact, their sparkling had become somewhat independent as of late. He whistled a greeting tune at Blurr from inside his playpen before going back to his self-imposed task of attempting to crawl up the wall. Shockwave had observed the shift in behavior, concluded it was simply a developmental phase, and had ceased being concerned.

Breaking off from Blurr’s grasp on his arm, he moved to go to his work table but was stopped by a touch on his wrist gauntlet.

“Shockwave-I-” His words cut off short, white servos wringing together while he fidgeted. “-I have some concerns about the newspark’s frame-I-think-I-think-there's-something-

probably-definitely-wrong with it and I think you should take a look because it's not growing bigger and it's been exactly six-point-three quartexes and-"

The Decepticon was already herding Blurr to his examination table by the eighth word. He would never decline a request to observe their creation's growth. The concerns were not unfounded either, as his abdominal plating had remained only subtly curved even several quartexes into gestation, though Shockwave did have his own theory on why this was so.

Seeing the courier's spark never ceased to make Shockwave's spinal struts shiver, and his own spark ache with longing. It was hot and vibrant and utterly strange to behold. Even now it threatened to burst free of its casing, pulsing wildly to its own beat. Orbiting it just as fast was the newspark, and its appearance –lively, bright, and so very miniscule in comparison to Shockwave's servo– made him feel something unidentifiable. Something he could not name.

He thought, perhaps, that it was *love*, but that notion was dismissed quickly.

He took his time with his tests and examinations of their creation, which ensured that every result he got was undoubtedly correct, and also provided the opportunity to relish the way Blurr was laid bare for him.

"I can find no irregularities with the newspark itself; all is developing as it should." Blurr frowned as he sat up, his chest plates sealing closed with a *click*.

Shockwave paused, finials fanning wide in shock as he stared at Blurr's *unmarked* chassis. He had not noticed- his Autobot badge was gone. All that remained was a discolored patch of blue paint where the symbol had been magnetized for centuries.

What could it mean? Shockwave was not sure. Perhaps Blurr had caved to Shockwave's subtle attempts at converting him to the Decepticon cause over the past few deca-cycles. Or perhaps Blurr was signaling an interest in the scientist through the removal of his Autobrand? But why not bring this matter to Shockwave directly, if that were so?

Blurr remained oblivious to the Decepticon's internal conflict. He said something about the newspark's developing frame and grabbed Shockwave's servo to press it to his abdomen. His optics narrowed pointedly.

Grounded by the action, Shockwave resolved to address the matter of the Autobrand at a later time, and instead pulled out his medical scanner.

His theory was proven correct by the scan: their sparkling was simply a minibot. It was common for frame-born bots to be of a smaller frame class, since frame size had more to do with ease of construction –Blurr would undoubtedly have difficulty carrying a larger sparkling– and availability of materials, rather than genetics. Despite Shockwave's efforts to keep Blurr's diet well supplemented, their planet lacked much of what was needed for a carrier to create a larger-framed bot.

The tension in Blurr's frame eased as this was explained to him, but his brow ridges remained creased with concern. "Do-we-have-enough-energon-? We don't even seem to have enough

to make a sparkling let alone two and there's also me and you and your annoying seeker who-come-to-think-of-it-I-have-not-seen-in-a-while but it does not seem possible-feasible-or-realistic that we're going to be able to survive much longer what do we do if that happens do you think your space bridge will work by then I really-really-really hope-it-does-because--"

Shockwave could not help but run his servo soothingly down Blurr's spinal strut, indulgent and warm.

"Do not distress yourself with this matter," He nearly crooned, unacceptably affectionate but he no longer cared enough to correct his own behavior. "I have many contingency plans in place to sustain us."

Blurr looked at him dubiously but yielded without further comment. With each stroke down his back he swayed nearer to Shockwave, further placing himself within the Decepticon's grasp.

--

Acid rain pattered against the window and sent scattered little shadows across Shockwave's form. Dim light from one of Cybertron's moons shone through the glass and allowed Blurr to see more clearly as the gunformer twitched and jerked in his recharge. The larger bot was curled on his side on Blurr's recharge mat, frame hunched tight as though wounded.

Blurr had seen this type of night-flux with older bots like Kup and Chromia. Data from ages past would sometimes clutter up the processor, resurface during recharge, and refuse to be compressed into easily locked-away memory files. The result was a loop of data and memories that was difficult to break free from, often lasting joors before settling. It was a common affliction for older mechanisms, or so Kup had claimed.

For a nano-klik he debated over whether to wake the mech. On one servo he didn't want to risk getting hurt if Shockwave emerged from recharge disoriented, but-on-the-other-servo, he looked *scared*. It was discomfiting and strange to see him so vulnerable, with his blocky frame in a stiff curl and finials pressed flat to his helm.

In one quick movement, Blurr swept Wheelie from his place sprawled next to Shockwave's chassis and placed the sparkling onto a small mound of mesh blankets near the mat. Then he slipped his fingers into a gap in Shockwave's armor at the elbow articulator of his gun-arm. He pinched a few specific wires -neural wiring for integrated weaponry had a distinctly different feel in comparison to the wiring that controlled limbs, something he had learned from Firestar when he'd helped during one of her medic shifts. Not too hard, but enough pressure to render them momentarily nonfunctional.

Softly, he tapped a finger against one of the mech's finials to wake him.

“*Shockwave*.” Blurr bit the whisper out, struggling to control the speed of his voice. Trying to be gentle, he whispered a second time.

Shockwave’s optic flickered to life and Blurr scooted away when a violent flinch shook the larger mech.

His gun-arm raised immediately but remained nonfunctional long enough for him to regain control of himself. Blurr inched closer when his optic dimmed from feverishly bright to something more stable. Shockwave stared at his gun for a long moment before he stretched his arm out and relaxed, relieved as the wiring unkinked.

Blurr froze when Shockwave looked at him, then at Wheelie’s out-of-the-way placement, and seemed to understand what had happened.

“Your decision to wake me, and subsequent method, was logical and is... appreciated.” He murmured; his vocalizer rough from recharge. Blurr remained silent as the larger bot resettled himself on the mat. He was hyper aware of the closeness of their frames, the soft patter of acid, and the heat that emanated from Shockwave’s normally cool plating. It made his optics flicker tiredly. The more the sparkling inside his frame grew, the more often he found himself feeling exhausted, which was a novel experience. It wasn’t *too* bad, he concluded, but it did give him the urge to plaster himself to Shockwave and recharge for an entire cycle.

Which he didn’t think would be a good idea. He didn’t know how the Decepticon would respond to that and he also wasn’t sure if he even *trusted* Shockwave enough to get close to him. *Well-!* Sure-they-were-recharging-next-to-each-other- but that was a different situation! It seemed that after gaining permission to come around Blurr’s bar, Shockwave had decided to come around *all-the-time*. Blurr couldn’t get rid of him.

He lingered like an annoyingly large glitchmouse infestation, and was enabled by the fact that whenever it rained he had to stay inside to avoid being melted to scrap. Specifically, inside Blurr’s bar, where he conveniently ended up every time the weather turned sour.

Blurr enjoyed it. He enjoyed it a traitorously large amount.

He would perk up every time his antenna-crest sensed the other's electrical signal approaching. Shockwave would appear to listen to Blurr talk for joors, watch him run, and take him all over Iacon to show him this-or-that science project. Blurr's days were now so full he barely had time to think, or remember.

He didn’t feel like an Autobot anymore. How could he, when all the world was made of just him and Shockwave?

But he knew the other mech hid things from him. He might've seemed different and more emotional, but he wasn’t radically changed. He was still a loyal Decepticon to an extreme.

And Shockwave was confusing. A mystery. He was-

Shockwave was uncomfortable.

Blurr watched as the gunformer lied stiffer than an offline frame, optic staring straight at the ceiling.

In an attempt to set the other mech at ease, Blurr lifted a cranky Wheelie out of his mesh nest and placed him onto Shockwave's large chest. Wheelie fell back into recharge as soon as he felt the Decepticon's strong spark pulse, his little orange helm clacking softly against purple plating. Shockwave relaxed in response, just-a-bit, and turned to look inquiringly at Blurr with one finial canted outward.

"He recharges better and you do too when you're next to one another so I figured I'd put him back since you seem-to-be-bothered-by-something-still- if you are inclined to tell me what's on your processor then-maybe-I-could-listen but that's just an offer there's no pressure -I'm-not-pressuring- but if you wanted to you could-"

Shockwave's helm followed his finial into a confused tilt. "You wish to know the contents of my recharge flux? Whatever for?"

"It-might-help-to-process-it-verbally-" Blurr leaned forward, blue optics wide and earnest. It had always helped Kup to tell a story or Chromia to mutter out a few words. Shockwave laid his helm down to stare at the ceiling again.

"It was but a troublesome memory." he said, dismissive, and turned to look at Blurr. "I am certain you know which."

"What do you mean which one are you talking about how would I know-"

He placed his single, massive servo against the glass on Blurr's windshield, directly over the spark. "I know you have seen it. You have seen all of me," His thumb traced a transformation seam. "As I have seen all of you."

Blurr was not as certain of that since he was sure he hadn't seen *everything* or else he would've been less confused but- but his frame flushed and his cooling fans wanted to activate at the words. Shockwave's EM field was soft with something Blurr didn't want to name.

"The focus of my mental processes drift, often, to you." His servo curled. "You are unlike any other."

It was said simply, not as a compliment but more a statement of fact.

Blurr thought about Shockwave, then. He thought of what he knew about the mech aside from the obvious things like how strong-or-intelligent-or-cruel he was. It was strange when he realized that the list of things he now found interesting or pleasant about the mech was longer than anything negative.

It was impossible to hate a bot that he *liked*.

"Shockwave-" Blurr had no response for once. At least not one he was able to articulate. All he felt in that moment was an overwhelming urge to be closer to the other bot. Shockwave

looked at him, considering, and shifted his servo down from Blurr's chassis to his hip plating.

"I doubt verbal processing will help in this moment. However," As if he were able to read processors, his servo tugged lightly at Blurr's hip. Not commanding, but inviting. Blurr sank into the gunformer's side immediately. His optics flickered while his exhaustion caught up with him; arms wound around Shockwave's shoulders, face pressed into the junction where neck cabling met chest armor. The sparkling in his chassis sang, buzzing in pure contentment where it was cradled to his spark.

Shockwave sagged; his EM field draped over all three mechanisms in his arms. "I would not be averse to hearing you speak, to fill the silence."

Blurr's vents sighed gustily while he considered the request.

His own personal data bank and thoughts were too jumbled to come up with anything to say, so he opened an Alpha Trion file that he had never finished reading. Not one that had any real value: it was a religious text. Maybe Shockwave would find it amusing.

He shifted to get more comfortable, his antenna-crest wedged snugly under Shockwave's 'chin'.

"Okay if you want me to then I have one thing from my memory bank-" Blurr paused, then started the text where he had left off. He didn't have the voice or verbal pacing ability to make the story sound entertaining, but he knew Shockwave didn't care about such things.

"-Arms curled in and plating flared out until he was transformed into a living planet. A machine with a mind at the center of a world. The world- Primus- started the second part of his plan. Forges within his frame lit up as he crafted the first of his creations; creatures of metal and skin, with many faces and a cruel intellect-

His firstborn, the Quintessons, were content to live upon his surface- for a time. Their intellect and greed drove their insatiable desire for conquest and expansion. They plundered and extracted whatever they wished from the world until Primus was made barren, but this was not the end. The Quintessons had discovered a means to generate eternal life-'"

"-Eternal life?" Shockwave inquired tiredly; his voice contemplative.

"Yes-yes-yes let me read it-!" Blurr huffed, and lightly kicked the purple mech's thigh. "-by feeding stars to their ancient creator. This process renewed their creator but it required relocation with every star consumed. Their journeys were endless, a constant search throughout the cosmos for stars to cultivate into fuel and new species to conquer and enslave. Primus, weary of his elder creations' behavior, gathered his energy and lit his forges once more to create a second race-'"

"Consuming stars..." Shockwave considered the idea, before scoffing. "What mystical nonsense." But his yellow optic dimmed as he drew closer to falling into recharge. The courier continued the story and curled his frame closer to the gunformer, their creations tucked between them.

Outside, the storm retreated, revealing the first rays of Hadeen's light as the star peeked over the horizon.

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Blurr rocked on his pedes and stretched his arms out contentedly. Wheelie's tiny servos smacked the back of his helm, impatient, while inside his forge Haywire kicked his internals with vigor.

"Alright-alright-alright I'll let you down but you remember the rule don't go too far-!" Blurr reached behind himself and pulled Wheelie from the sling, then set the sparkling onto the ground to let him explore the neighborhood. He was maybe not the best creator and let his sparkling wander through portions of the city sometimes, usually for small bursts of time whenever he rested during his daily run. But contrary to what Shockwave thought, he didn't let Wheelie go unsupervised.

He kept an optic on his sparkling while he stretched, fans whirring away to cool him down. Blurr winced- one servo pressed to his abdomen. Haywire didn't seem to get the concept of cooling down. His sparkling loved when Blurr ran, its excitement was obvious as it wriggled its new frame around in his gestation tank.

Blurr felt nervous about the future, but he did look forward to emergence and getting to spend time with his second sparkling, who's energy levels seemed to match perfectly with his. He felt a little sad, too. There was an empty place next to his spark where the newspark had once been. It had descended into its partially-formed frame and protoform just a few cycles prior; a terrible experience, but a short one. The pain had been over before Blurr had even finished comming Shockwave about it.

The developing sparkling frame was dense-as-scrap though. It killed Blurr's suspicions that it would be a racer and was a complete pain on his pedes and lower backplates. He felt aches and cramps in his struts from the strain of carriage yet he still ran every cycle, stubbornly committed to enjoying his freedom. Even if it meant he had to take extra time each morning to recalibrate himself to the ever-growing weight in his forge.

Ahead of him, Wheelie transformed into his little round car alt-mode to drive clumsy circles between chunks of debris on the street. Blurr watched, amused by his sparkling's determination despite his lack of coordination. After a while the courier folded into his own alt-mode and nudged at Wheelie's bumper to get his attention.

His sparkling beeped in surprise, then rolled to him and revved his miniature engine. Blurr pushed all his affection and amusement into his EM field for Wheelie to feel, and revved his own engine challengingly in response.

He took off. Not-actually-going-fast-he-might-as-well-have-walked- but he had to be mindful of Wheelie's teeny-tiny frame while they raced through Iacon's abandoned streets. Several

times he doubled back to drive teasing loops around Wheelie or to nudge the sparkling back onto the road whenever he veered clumsily off track. They didn't get very far before Wheelie reverted to root-mode and fell into recharge right in the middle of the road.

Blurr transformed and picked up his exhausted creation. With a smile on his lipplates, he pressed a kiss to the sparkling's soft protoform cheek and tucked him into the sling on his back. He could feel his own exhaustion creeping on him. It was an odd experience, but he was grateful that with Haywire sapping away his energy he no longer had to worry about excess charge. He-was-just-so-tired, and he made his way to Shockwave's tower blearily, the grey ruins of Iacon a blur to his optics.

When he approached the tower, he glanced upward and spotted the blocky shape of Shockwave's frame on the topmost balcony. He was doing *something*- the same task he did almost every cycle without fail and absolutely refused to tell Blurr what it was. Whatever it was, the Decepticon was completely dedicated to it. Blurr had been spotting him on that balcony since before he'd even been captured all those many quartexes ago.

Optics narrowed, he zipped his way to the lab and crept inside silently. He crouched behind a prototype time machine (Blurr privately thought the scientist had way too much time on his servos. His lab had practically everything and anything) and watched as Shockwave entered from the balcony. He couldn't exactly make out what was outside. It looked almost like a communication satellite. He did, however, see the code Shockwave used to lock the entrance.

The scientist stalked forward, a couple of datapads in servo, with the clear intention of uploading their contents to his console. Thinking quick, Blurr ran out of the lab and then ran back in, this time being *much* noisier. He made a show of putting Wheelie down in his playpen to nap before he flung himself into Shockwave's lap.

"Blurr, what are-" His rasp cut off, strangled. His finials waggled in surprise and servo paused just before unlocking his console.

Yawning deep through his vents, Blurr wound his arms around Shockwave's neck cabling sweetly and purred his engine. He could feel the way the Decepticon shuddered underneath his touch.

"Shockwave-" He put all of his willpower into exaggerating how tired he was, slurring his words. "-It's okay if I recharge here right I'm tired-exhausted-beat and it's so far to run to the bar..."

With a remarkable amount of self-discipline, Shockwave's EM field retreated. But Blurr didn't need to worry- a gun-arm wound itself around his waist and tugged him closer.

"Of course." Shockwave trembled when Blurr rubbed his cheek affectionately against the side of the other's purple helm in wordless thanks. The racer feigned entering recharge immediately after. He set his optics to the lowest possible brightness without turning them off and waited for the Decepticon to unlock his console.

It was odd to know what Shockwave did when he thought he was in recharge.

He looked at him for a long moment, then tilted his helm to rest against Blurr's in hesitant mimicry of the racer's earlier action.

When he collected himself and unlocked his console, Blurr memorized the combination. He felt slightly guilty about his deception while Shockwave opened a file and uploaded the contents of his datapads to it.

Not too guilty though. He wanted to know what was going on and he certainly didn't trust Shockwave to tell him.

Unfortunately, Shockwave didn't open any of the data from his pads. He only set them to upload in the background and brought up a new tab with notes from an unrelated science project to work on. True exhaustion overtook Blurr after that. Ensconced within the Decepticon's arms, Blurr didn't realize that he'd started *actually* recharging until joors later, when he was awoken by a jabbing pain.

"Ow-ow-ow-owowow-" He whined, shifting on top of Shockwave's thighs.

"What is it?" Shockwave questioned, finials swivelling in concern. Despite the discomfort from what felt like his sparkling running a marathon in his internals, the larger bot's EM field was so saturated with contentment that it was soothing to Blurr.

"Haywire's been kicking and punching and spinning every two astro-seconds I swear I can't go an astro-second not-one-single-astro-second without-"

"Haywire?" Shockwave tilted his helm and set his palm over blue stomach plating. His optic brightened when he felt vibrations from the sparkling's movements through the metal.

Blurr leaned away from his chestplate, embarrassed.

"It's my name for the sparkling since it's so hyper and moves all the time though it would've been a better name for a racer but I think it'll still fit and I'm not changing it so you'd better-"

"I have no objections to your choice. It is an adequate designation for a mechanism- and far more preferable than '*Wheelie*'."

"Hey!" Blurr poked the center of Shockwave's large chest and scowled. "Don't bully the sparkling it's a decent designation and besides I didn't name him but If I had it would have been something much-much-much more fitting."

"Of course," Shockwave agreed. It was hard to tell since he had no face, but he seemed amused. Or as amused as he ever got.

A large servo closed around the one Blurr had poking Shockwave's chest and used it to reel him back in until he was once again curled on the other's lap. His helm propped on Shockwave's shoulder and long blue legs dangled over the armrest.

Fully recharged and ready to go; Blurr squirmed. He definitely was not in the mood to sit around now.

But Shockwave seemed disinclined to release him, so he resigned himself to swinging his pedes and ranting into Shockwave's audial for a few joors. Whether or not he was annoyed or if he enjoyed the endless chatter was unknown, since he gave no indication of any emotion while he worked at his console. Blurr wasn't even sure he was listening, but ultimately that didn't matter. It was nice to talk and have someone there to talk at.

Blurr wondered if Shockwave liked having another bot around to talk at him, to fill the silence.

Idly, he traced patterns onto the flat top of one of Shockwave's shoulders while he retold a story Greenlight had shared with him once.

"-and I wouldn't want to go to Lithone after she told me that and also because they don't have half of the race tracks there that I've heard they have on Velocitron and who would want to go to a colony that doesn't even have a main attraction like that not me that's for sure-"

Shockwave spoke for the first time since Blurr had started rambling.

"Lithone was decimated by cosmic rust fifty stellar cycles ago."

"See I didn't know that but now I do know that and now I definitely wouldn't want to visit-"

"Would you wish to leave Cybertron?" The other bot questioned, sudden and carefully neutral.

"Well-obviously-!" Blurr cried, "If it were possible-realistic-and-safe-to-do-so then it would be the logical decision to go don't you agree?"

There was a long pause. Shockwave was unreadable.

"...It is as you said. It would be the logical decision."

Abruptly, he powered off his console and sat straighter.

"I must leave tonight, as there is a task that requires my presence outside of Iacon. I will merely be in Nova Cronum and return next cycle. However," His entire attention was on Blurr, optic intense. "Next cycle I must travel further, to Polyhex to solve another matter. If you wish to accompany me tomorrow, I would not be opposed."

Leave Iacon? What was Shockwave up to? But of course Blurr wanted a change of scenery so of course he said yes.

It gave him the perfect opportunity, too.

Later that cycle, after Shockwave had left to do whatever he needed to do in Nova Cronum, Blurr snuck back into the laboratory. With unrestricted access to almost all of the

Decepticon's files, and the security code to the balcony, Blurr finally uncovered the answers to his questions.

--

Hadeen was a disorienting level of bright, it's rays heated the matte plating on Shockwave's back kibble while he waited for Blurr to arrive. The entrance that led to the underground mass transit system was open behind him, and it appeared dark and invitingly cool. Shockwave checked his chronometer. It was abnormal for Blurr to be late.

Fortunately, he appeared not a klick later. His frame bounded gracefully, a smooth line of movement, blue and white armor glinting in the light as he approached.

"Sorry-I'm-late Wheelie didn't want to leave without one of his toys but he hid it somewhere I couldn't find and I had to look for it but when I found it so much time had passed--"

"It is no matter. May I?" Shockwave extended a servo toward Wheelie. Blurr was strangely avoidant, gaze bouncing around without meeting his optic. The orange sparkling was passed off hesitantly and Shockwave wasted no time placing him into the sling he had recently created. The new sling was more of a metal pouch, crafted in the same dull purple shade as his armor and magnetized to his broad chassis for ease of access. Wheelie settled into it without complaint, his grimy sparkling fingers plucking at the gunformer's chest plating.

Without further delay, Shockwave led Blurr beneath Cybertron's surface to the mass transit system. Its old railways were still functional and highly convenient. If he were on his own he would have simply flown to Polyhex in order to avoid having to activate the transit system, but as it was, he was laden with Blurr, Wheelie, and a small contingent of drones who had already boarded the transport compartment.

Blurr craned his helm around to peer out of the compartment's large windows while Shockwave set the navigation system on a route for Polyhex. The dusty, faded screen flashed with an ETA sometime in the afternoon, five joors from their time of departure.

"I didn't think this system still worked doesn't it require energon to run-?" Blurr questioned, and though his question was meant for Shockwave, his gaze was directed outside the window. The compartment jolted when it activated, thrusters gargling as they built momentum.

Shockwave sat, or perhaps more accurately, *perched* on a yellowed bench along the side of the space. His frame was not an optimal size to exist comfortably within the compartment. "It does, yes, but I have altered it to utilize my emergency solar panels as a power source instead."

A pede tapped, jittery, against the floor. “Hmm-”

His attention remained focused on the passing innards of Cybertron. He said no more, and Shockwave found himself at a loss to understand the shift in behavior. Pathetically, he felt forlorn when silence lingered between them. He wished the courier would speak as he usually did; his grating nasal voice was a balm— a comfort Shockwave indulged in far too often as of late.

Wheelie had no issue talking, fortunately.

“Run!” His vocalizer emitted a harsh click from the effort, then he repeated the word, excitedly flapping his servo at the passing scenery outside and looking at Shockwave. His minor vocal glitch was not improving, but also was not worsening. It seemed to evolve with his speech program as he grew.

“Indeed.” Shockwave stroked an indulgent finger across the sparkling’s cheek “Though we are not running; it is the compartment that is moving.”

Wheelie screeched the word once more and then bit Shockwave’s finger. It did not hurt. Amused, Shockwave waggled his finger and watched as the sparkling’s optics went wide and he bit harder, clamping down and squealing emphatically. A feral little creature, Shockwave observed, his behavior almost akin to organic beasts or wild mechanimals. Blurr had mentioned that his original creators had been colony mechs; perhaps he had been exposed to a harsher environment during the first few stellar cycles of his functioning. Not that Cybertron was not harsh, but it was an... uninhabited type of harsh. There was no longer any wildlife to emulate.

He thought he felt Blurr’s gaze, but when he looked, he remained focused elsewhere.

Silence returned when Wheelie became entranced by the way light filtered in through the windows, and he sat quietly with the older bots, just observing.

With nothing to distract, Shockwave felt older memories stir within his processor, roused by their current method of transportation. Unpleasant memories. Things he wished not to remember from an Age long passed. The compartment was stifling; too small and delicate, a reminder that it had not been built with warframes like himself in mind. Without his protocols in place to keep him focused, he was inundated with emotional data that had never been properly processed.

Joors passed, and Shockwave felt relieved when they arrived in Polyhex. The city was not much better off than Iacon, being abandoned and partially destroyed by old battles. However, the architecture of the city was far more accommodating to larger frames and had wider, cleaner streets.

“You do not wish to explore?” Shockwave inquired when, instead of running off as he’d expected, Blurr followed him to the city’s command center.

"I-think-I-think I'll stick with you and see what happens-"

His audial fins flicked in confusion. “Ah. Very well.”

Polyhex was logically, and pleasingly, designed. The command center was at the center of the city, nestled within an organized spiral of hexagonal neighborhoods, and contained all of the major controls for the city’s power lines and defense systems. It made Shockwave’s task much easier to complete. If all went without issue, he may have extra time to personally inspect sector fourteen and set up a new hologram projector. The gap in Cybertron’s defense system was a constant anxiety in the back of his processor, and Nacelle’s recent behavior did not inspire confidence.

The command center’s security systems were offline but the doors to the entrance were locked. Shockwave raised his gun-arm and fired. There was deafening silence before a crashing *choom*, a flash of purple light, and then the doorway was obliterated. Blurr followed him inside with caution, optics narrowed and one of his servos cupped over his curved abdominal plating.

He nearly forgot Blurr was in the room, absorbed as he was in his work at the main console of the facility, until he spoke from behind him.

“Why are we here Shockwave-?” He asked, and his blue optics stared with an intensity that had not been seen since he’d first been captured. “I mean why are *you* here what’s the purpose the task the intended result-?”

It was not information that Blurr would understand the larger implications of, so Shockwave told him the truth.

“I am diverting power from all surrounding sectors and cities to Iacon. There, these resources can be better utilized.”

“Oh-oh-oh-” Blurr nodded his helm in understanding. “And how will this power be utilized? For your space-bridge? For fuel since we have not-one-but-two-sparklings?”

“Or maybe-” He hissed, and Shockwave was thrown by his rapidly changing emotions. “Maybe you’ll use it for the energon-guzzling-deep-space-satellite-comms-system you power up every-single-cycle to send *unanswered* messages to Megatron?”

Shockwave set down the datapad he’d been holding and faced the racer completely.

“You deceived me.” Blurr's soft touches the previous cycle... his frame had pressed so sweetly to Shockwave’s... and Shockwave had *felt*-

Something white-hot and foreign overwhelmed him. It had been a ploy to gain access codes. Blurr had been playing him.

He felt something he had never been capable of feeling before the other bot had unknowingly stripped away his suppressant protocols, before he had been changed: *anger*.

“Of-course-I-did and for good reason too Shockwave you’re killing us how do you not see the rate at which your communications waste energon you’re using over 60.67% of the

energon reserves and Cybertron will be completely dry within the stellar cycle and for what reason there is no proof that they are even online and wasting resources like this is-is-is *illogical-!*”

“You do not understand-“

“No you don’t understand you-don’t-you-don’t you won’t find them before we run out of energon-! It’s-impossible-impossible-“

Shockwave’s servo clenched into a fist, cold anger numbing his circuits. Then, just as swiftly, he released his servo and ruthlessly quashed down the requests to activate his cannon that'd sprung up on his HUD. He could not. It would be unacceptable to harm Blurr.

But he was still enraged, and he could not find it within himself to be rational in the moment.

“You would not understand. My loyalty is not so weak as yours.” Blurr flinched, servo pressed to the as-of-yet unaddressed blank space where the Autobot symbol once was. “I am loyal to the Decepticons and it is my duty to remain on Cybertron. I am indebted to Megatron.” Shockwave held his arms out, highlighting the lack of clawed, painful, empuratee appendages.

Blurr looked at his arms in confusion. “What does that mean I don’t know what that means-“

Realization dawned. “You do not know.” He was too young, and of course, the Autobots would not wish to reveal past crimes of their beloved Golden Age to their newer generations. He would not have understood Shockwave’s early memories during their merge. The realization made him feel... lonely. It was an empty, aching sensation, somehow familiar despite him not having felt it for millennia.

Shockwave’s loyalty to the Decepticons, to Megatron, had been his one irrational action. His one exception throughout all his kilocycles of functioning, even with his emotion suppression protocols in place. It was illogical. Especially when he could've simply overthrown Megatron, as he was certain he could lead the Decepticons *far* more efficiently– but that was neither here nor there; the fact remained that it was needed.

Shockwave had been hurt once, and the Decepticons had made him whole. His devotion was owed.

“It is irrelevant now. I will not cease communications, I will not abandon my duty, and *you* will not leave.”

Blurr skittered back, optics wide. “You lied to me too I should’ve known you would but you did-you-did-you-did the space bridge could take us off planet but you won’t go you won’t let me go-“

Shockwave stepped forward, servo reaching to grasp, but he retreated further. His blue optics flickered in his helm like a cornered turbofox, shoulders hunched defensively.

“You can’t keep me here-!” Blurr shrieked, “You can’t-you-can’t-youcan’t-”

“I can.” Shockwave said, blunt. “You may run, but no matter how far, you’ll not escape.”

The engine within the racer's frame let loose a horrible grinding, shrieking sound and Blurr fled the building. His sprint was slowed by the weight of the sparkling in his frame but he still managed to evade Shockwave’s grasp.

Wheelie wailed from his place on Shockwave’s chassis, and the Decepticon knew it would be logical to simply stay where he was and wait, for truly there was *nowhere* for Blurr to escape to. But rational thinking had abandoned him, and he gave chase.

He ran into the street after Blurr just in time to watch as scaled, techno-organic reptilian creatures crept out from the shadows of the surrounding buildings and shot him down. Shockwave's processor could not compute the sudden, jarring presence of the alien invaders before some sort of electrical blast hit him.

The sight of Blurr’s crumpled frame looped twice in his processor before his mental functions were forcibly rendered nonfunctional.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so tired and um the charging cord to my computer broke so I wrote the last half of this chapter on my phone, apologies if there's errors!! I feel like this chapter is a little rough but honestly I'm too tired to fix it 🤔 It been awhile, but part of the story Blurr reads from Alpha Trion's files was first mentioned in chp2.

also,

Happy new years!!

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“It can be fatal to have a heart.”

-Star Trek

Blurr woke as he was being unloaded from some sort of transport shuttle to a much larger ship. Slung over the shoulder of a huge, scaly creature, his processor lagged for a moment post-reboot before sharpening into hyper-focused clarity when protocols he'd never seen before sprang to life. A sharp, vicious, *violent* feeling made every strut in his frame tense in anticipation, and Blurr had never been a violent mech but the terrible sensation of a cold, *still* weight in his forge made frantic terror race through his circuits and all sorts of protective protocols activate.

Haywire was never still.

Switching abruptly from unconscious to hyper, he started wriggling his way free immediately and the alien creatures grunted in alarm around him. The one holding him tried to tighten its grip but it had obviously been unprepared for Blurr to come back online. He wasn't even restrained. Just before Blurr could escape, one of the other alien creatures clumsily grabbed his waist, its thick servos pawed across his hip plating and tried to use the curve of his abdominal plates to hold on.

He scowled. His frame went eerily motionless; blue optics narrowed dangerously.

Not a klik later and Blurr's pede kicked out with the full force of his strength and he felt it when the pawing creature's helm shattered into metal shards and oddly squishy mush. Swinging his leg down and building momentum again, he drove his knee joint into the stomach of the alien that held him. Yells and grunts rang around him in an odd language that his courier language translator couldn't place, growing louder as his kick caused the creature to drop him and he landed on the balls of his pedes.

Sprinting away from the shuttle and into the larger ship, a million thoughts filtered through his mind as he ran through alien and unfamiliar hallways. He didn't pause to look at the

aliens he passed- they were all flashes to his optics as he flew by. He only needed to get *out-out-out-*

A few aliens tried to stop him as he ran but he was going so-so-so fast. Pedes pounded; rough gravel scraped the undersides as the corridors led him lower, deeper into the ship where it was unkempt and dark. A ringing noise whistled in his audials. His crest picked up signal after signal. Smoke clouded past his frame- no, it clouded *from* his frame as he picked up speed. He didn't know where he was going, his systems were overwhelmed with the mission to get out by any means necessary and when another batch of alien soldiers stepped into his path, Blurr found himself speeding up further. His speedometer clicked as he reached its limit, then glitched when he surpassed it. That protective, vicious feeling seared a line from his spark to his neural net and when he collided into his abductors, they split apart softly around him; arms and legs wrenched from sockets with the ease of the smoothest oil poured from a can.

Colliding with their techno-organic bodies barely slowed him down. Familiar pink blood drenched his frame- dripped down his nasal ridge and tasted bitter on his glossa. Horror momentarily overwrote whatever madness had overcome him and he stared at his servos as he ran, disturbed by the way energon pink blotted out the blue of his armor.

"Oof-!" A turn down a wide green corridor had him tripping over a wire trap laid out on the floor. He tumbled, curled in on himself to protect his sparkling when he hit the ground. More of the aliens descended upon him from where they had been lying in wait, throwing a net over his frame and tightening it excessively. A few of them wielded long, thin guns like the ones he'd been shot with earlier and they pointed them at him with caution.

"Let me out let-me-out-letmeoutofhererightnow-!" He bucked and kicked inside the net, and in order to restrain him it took several of the hulking creatures holding the net on both sides to counteract the power of his thrashing legs. One of the gun-wielding aliens shuffled closer with a nervous look in its optics, and Blurr fought harder, unwilling to be hit with another of those electrical blasts. It had done something to his sparkling he-was-sure-of-it-

A new alien, still green and oddly squishy but smaller and more mech-shaped, approached and smacked a gun out of the closest scaled-creature's grasp. It yelled, and thrust a servo out to point at the blue Cybertronian's curved abdominal plating. Cowed, the larger creatures lowered their weapons and the smaller one approached Blurr.

Helpless to stop it, Blurr tried to wiggle away but the smaller alien clamped a set of stasis cuffs around his ankles, then around his wrists, and he collapsed into a limp but conscious full-frame paralysis. He couldn't even talk- the stasis cuffs made it feel like tar had been poured into his intake. Fear and humiliation lanced through his spark when he was once again picked up by a scaled creature, but instead of being thrown over one of its shoulders, he was held like some- like-some-kind-of-sparkling!

Blurr scowled, and though the reptilian creature holding him did fidget nervously under his unerring glare (since-he-couldn't-talk-and-give-it-a-piece-of-his-processor), it gave him little satisfaction.

The journey through the massive ship to get to wherever they were taking him to took forever. These aliens were infuriatingly slow. Nervous energy trapped under his plating rippled and scratched against his protoform and he couldn't help but worry as his situation caught up with him: what if Shockwave had been captured? What if *Wheelie* had been captured? What if Wheelie was hurt? What if Haywire was-

To distract himself from distressing thoughts, and the persistent stillness in his gestation tank, he shifted his gaze to look at his surroundings.

Blinking pink energon out of his optical lenses, Blurr peered at odd gold glyphs that had been ornamentally carved into the green walls of the ship's hallways. It seemed like the ship was enormous, with a trillion different tedious levels that they ascended, one by one, and with each new level the inscriptions became more intricate. He couldn't understand most of the symbols, some looked like a strange curly form of neocybex script while others looked like images. Though what they depicted was a mystery to him- at first. As they rose higher into the ship, Blurr recognized a reoccurring image of Cybertron and several different types of creatures, some bipedal and others egg-like and strange, with tentacles and many faces.

A repeated theme seemed to include Cybertron, the aliens, and a star.

Blurr's brow ridge creased as he tried to understand it. He was just getting to a strip of wall that depicted Cybertron splitting open and unfolding -it-almost-looked-like-a-mech- when the aliens ducked into a doorway and he was plunged into darkness. His frame was fumbled around as the alien lackeys shifted so that he was held by his arms between two of them, his pedes dragging on the ground as they approached a light at the end of the dark hallway.

Blinking once more, but this time to adjust to the change in brightness, Blurr stared in fear as he was dragged out into a large chamber with a towering domed ceiling and a huge pit in the center of the floor. Blurr couldn't see down into the pit but he could hear an ominous amount of sloshing and snapping echoing from its depths. He was shuffled, thankfully, around the pit and to a large dais overlooking it.

"What is the reason for this break in protocol?" A slimy looking alien questioned in accented neocybex. Blurr gawked at it shamelessly, watching as the tentacles that sprouted where its arms should have been snapped with irritation.

"A gift!" The smaller alien that had put the stasis cuffs on him crowed, eagerly gesturing to Blurr. Or rather, Blurr's abdominal plating. "Reports from the surface have found it barren, only ten spark-signals were picked up on our scanners."

'Ten-?' Blurr felt dizzy.

"And?" The larger alien scoffed. It's shiny-lumpy green skin was excreting lubricant profusely but it seemed unfazed by it. Organics were gross, in Blurr's opinion. "Good riddance. Invasive, useless *pests*."

"Not useless!" The smaller alien persisted, inching up on the tips of its pedes to peer at something behind the larger alien. "The Imperial Magistrate understands- surely, after

regeneration we'll need slaves to build our new empire, and this one is clearly fit to produce them."

Blurr's optics widened as ice ran through his lines. *Slaves*- They wanted-

The larger alien turned to look behind itself. "What is the Imperial Magistrate's verdict? Useful? Or disposable?"

The texts from Alpha Trion's data files suddenly came to mind as a creature emerged from shadows on the dais. Quintessons! They were just as slimy-nasty-ugly as the texts had portrayed them. Blurr tried to cringe away as the Imperial Magistrate emerged, its bulbous body floating forward, bolstered by writhing tentacles. It clicked loudly when its many faces rotated on its egg-frame to settle on a face that was green and smiling.

"Scan both mechanisms." It ordered, imperious.

There was a flurry of motion as all of the aliens rushed to obey. A medical scanner was procured and waved across his frame. "Healthy." Was all the smaller alien declared, and then specifically waved the scanner across where Haywire was.

"Stunned- but healthy. And this is not all." A familiar screeching met Blurr's audials. He couldn't turn to look when the crowd of techno-organic aliens parted and Wheelie was brought forward and magnetized to Blurr's windshield. His sparkling was shaking, thin orange plating clattering on his protoform.

"We recovered this one with its deformed mate. Yes, if the Imperial Magistrate agrees, I believe this specimen will be quite productive."

Stasis cuffs rendered him utterly still, unable to even flinch as the Magistrate approached, slithering a frigid tentacle around his waist and circling him assessingly. No matter which face it presented, its optics remained greedy, old, and shrewd as it surveyed his frame for flaws. Wheelie hissed and beeped and trembled on his chassis, scooting up to burrow his helm into Blurr's neck cabling while the tentacle groped the older Transformer's waist in calculated twists. The Quintesson's faces changed as it floated around him, muttering and arguing with itself loudly.

The larger alien guard repeated itself when the Magistrate finally retreated from Blurr's frame. "What is the Imperial Magistrate's verdict?"

"Useful." The Quintesson judged, looking down at them all with hungry optics. "The gift is accepted; take him to the stockade."

Blurr wasn't sure if he should be relieved, or terrified.

The litter of hundreds of dismantled, torn robotic frames were scattered haphazardly around the stockade cells, and he scanned through them on instinct to look for anything of value. It was his way, even with the threat of imminent deactivation looming over his helm.

No one escaped the Quintessons. The transformers of Junkion, being situated so close to the edge of civilized space, knew this better than most. Despite this, Wreck-Gar wasn't about to stop trying to escape. He figured he may as well search through what was available to him, maybe *something* useful would be scrounged up.

He was still there joors later, crouched in the corner of his cell behind a pile of thermal regulators, rusty fuel pumps, and a couple well-preserved jet-frame knee-joints, when a commotion echoed from down the hallway. Wreck-Gar perked up, optics scanning to see what was happening but he didn't try to come out from his place at the back of the cell. *He* wasn't going to be shark-bait yet!

Two guards came down the hallway escorting a heavily restrained courier-racer model.

Overkill security, in Wreck-Gar's opinion.

The bot they held was a little pink slip of a thing, hardy capable of causing much damage. Wreck-Gar's scans didn't find any powerful modifications or integrated weaponry; just a ridiculous amount of cooling vents and an interesting sensory crest. There were even stasis cuffs clamped around the bot's ankle-armor!

Intrigued, he waited until after the guards stomped away to approach the new resident of the cell to the left of his. He watched while the courier sat on the ground scowling and rubbing his newly-freed wrists, though the cuffs on his legs remained, keeping him seated and paralyzed from the waist down. Something was hidden against the bot's chassis, cradled inside pink arms, and the Junkion inched closer to the unaware bot trying to see what it could be.

Wreck-Gar's vocalizer (not his original one, this one was his seventh replacement that he'd scavenged from an offline mid-size transport mech) choked with surprised static when he spotted what the courier was hiding. And also, when he realized that the bot wasn't *pink*.

Drenched in energon, the courier whipped around to stare at him with narrow blue optics, a tiny orange sparkling curled on his chassis.

"Stay-stay-stay back I'm telling you don't come one step closer or else I'll-I'll-!" The bot talked *fast*. Something must be wrong with his timing belt, Wreck-Gar guessed, but he didn't understand why the mech wouldn't just replace that.

"No harm no foul- you can trust Antilla's best attorney at law with all your legal mishaps, call today!" The Junkion babbled, lifting his arms to show he meant no threat to the carrier. Back on Junkion, protective carriers were not to be messed with- unless you *liked* rebuilding your frame from scrap.

The other bot canted his helm to the left, and Wreck-Gar could practically see the language translator in his helm running at full speed. He'd picked apart enough courier models to know that they all had translators wedged into their helms.

“Jun-ki-on-?” The carrier sounded out rapidly, as if he were reading it from his HUD. “Never-heard-of-that-language but I get what you’re saying and I don’t trust it but I guess I don’t have many options being cooped up in here- and what are you doing here? Do you know a way to get out? We’ve gotta get out of here I’ve-gotta-get-outta-here-!”

The bot in the other cell swayed from stress, optics flickering with exhaustion, and his sparkling let out a little whimper.

“Whoah, whoah.” Wreck-Gar scooted closer to the electrified cell bars and cooed reassuringly. He dug into his subspace and withdrew a crumpled bit of energon goodie he’d been saving and snapped it in half, offering the larger piece. “One hundred-per-cent high quality Bitlet-Bites, at a great discount.”

The bot blinked at him quickly, optics darting from the goodie to Wreck-Gar's face plates with suspicion. The sparkling in his arms made a needy noise, tiny servos reaching out for the energon.

Carefully, the courier dragged himself closer, and in the process revealed more of his front plating. Wreck-Gar's optical sensors fizzled.

“Buy one get one half-off! Looks like you’ve got a surprise bonus- go ahead and take the whole prize.” The Junkion thrust both pieces at the carrier, staring in shock at the curve in stomach plating where there was undoubtedly a *second* sparkling being built. Two! Wreck-Gar was worried; this was no place for sparklings.

“I-can’t-take-all-of-it!” The bot cried. “It’s yours and you need something too and-”

The Junkion insisted for at least a full breem, arguing back and forth until the carrier finally gave in.

Both carrier and creation had similar pleased expressions as they scarfed down the bits of energon goodie. Wreck-Gar soon learned their designations whether he’d wanted to or not. The courier -Blurr- talked a million words a nano-sec about anything and everything that came to his processor, and he seemed prone to working himself into the worst bouts of frantic anxiety the Junkion had ever seen.

“-Also I have to ask have you seen a mech he’s-about-this-tall and he’s purple with one big optic and he’s kind of difficult at first but eventually he grows on you but I need to know if you’ve seen him because if you have then maybe we have a chance of getting out of here but without him I think we have no hope no-hope no-hope-at-all-”

Wreck-Gar watched, a little lost, as Blurr babbled while wiping himself down with a ripped bit of mesh fabric that’d been discarded in his cell. The Junkion could barely make out a word the mech said and he was already distracted by the sleek blue plating that was revealed

to him with every wipe of the cloth. The courier was exceptionally well made, and even had all of his original parts still intact.

He could see *why* the mech had two sparklings.

“Stay tuned- Tonight's special broadcast of *‘Who’s the Sire!’* airs live-” Wreck-Gar hoped the sire was offline. *He* had no problem picking up what other bots left behind, especially when it was such an attractive mech- imminent offlining be damned.

Blurr glared and huffed in his cell, a tell-tale pink glow on his pretty white facial plates when his translator caught up to what the Junkion had said. “That-is-just-rude-”

A door at the end of the stockade opened and shut with a shriek, and the sound of guards approaching down the hallway silenced both of them immediately.

They both looked at one another, and then stared warily when a few Quintesson guards approached Blurr’s cell. The courier’s engine revved, deafeningly loud and aggressive to warn off the intruders but they remained unperturbed. Wreck-Gar was helpless, unable to intervene as an even more powerful grade of stasis cuffs were clamped around the Blurr’s wrists, knocking him unconscious in the cell.

Odd that the guards didn’t take him or the sparkling out of the cell. They just left them there, the carrier unconscious and arranged stiffly on his back. Storing him for later? Wreck-Gar thought so.

He was grateful the guards decided to drag off a couple prisoners from further down the hallway for Judgement, instead of taking him. He could hear their screams echo as they were dragged to the Sharkticon pit.

The sparkling, Wheelie, refused to leave his creator when Wreck-Gar tried to call him over, and after a few breems of fruitless cajoling the Junkion gave up and went back to looking for something to help them escape. If only he had something to disrupt the electric charge around the cell bars- or better, something to cut or bust the bars open.

Muttering to himself, he moved to shift through another pile when heavy, echoing pedesteps thundered down the hall. Something about the way those steps nearly drowned out the sound of the Quintesson’s guards’ steps made his plating shiver. Not one to deny his instincts, the Junkion crouched behind his biggest trash pile and waited.

The mech that was led into the empty cell to the right of Wreck-Gar’s was massive. His boxy helm threatened to scrape the ceiling as he walked calmly, self-controlled, as if he were there by his own will and not as a prisoner. Wreck-Gar’s scanners went wild- *this* mech should’ve been in double-stasis cuffs; a gun altmode, with powerful integrated weaponry -the Junkion’s optics latched greedily onto the gigantic gun he had for an arm- and war grade armor.

The new mech stumbled when he entered the cell, just the slightest movement, but enough to betray that he wasn’t quite as put together as he looked.

Once the guards left the mech stood still for an odd amount of time, staring forward as if dazed. Broad, powerful shoulders flexed once, twice, and then the mech turned in a slow half circle to look at his surroundings.

Wreck-Gar froze when he was caught in the light of an eerie yellow optic.

He was stared down for not even half a nano-sec before the mech visibly dismissed him as irrelevant, leaving Wreck-Gar both relieved and offended. The mech was emotionless- not a single movement betrayed his thoughts or possible feelings about the situation and no EM field could be felt from him. It was unnatural. The Junkion had seen empuratees before. They had been popular bots to throw into scrap-heaps, even ending up on planets as far out as Junkion, but even those had been capable of self-expression.

He appeared emotionless, until he caught sight of the unconscious carrier on the other side of Wreck-Gar's cell.

Huge finials jerked back and forth sharply and Wreck-Gar was a little rusty with reading finial movements, but they looked distressed. The new mech took an uncertain half-step toward the bars, his massive pede kicking up all kinds of debris and garbage.

“Blurr.” The mech called out in a raspy, accented voice and Wreck-Gar jumped in surprise. *This* was the sire?

Obviously, Blurr stayed unconscious but the sparkling perked up and squealed.

“Wheelie- do not-” The mech started, alarm making his optic flash once, and even Wreck-Gar ducked out from his safe spot to try and stop the sparkling before he could barrel through the bars, but he was too slow.

Fortunately for all of them, Wheelie was so tiny that his altmode allowed him to pass between the bars of each cell without harm.

A massive servo caught the sparkling before he could crash into the gunformer's leg, and the warframe held the sparkling close to nuzzle their helms together with extreme care. Wreck-Gar cursed internally; this was definitely the sire.

“Junkion.” Wreck-Gar swiveled to face the warframe when he spoke, looking at the bot warily. The mech was no less intimidating with a sparkling balanced on the top of his rather large chassis. “Are you able to ascertain if the bot in that cell is injured?”

“Fit as a Nebulon fiddle- a ding here a ding there but no worse for wear. Scrub's *'Grease be Gone!'* will take care of any pesky stains- good as new.”

The mech stared.

“I am unfamiliar with the specific dialect of Junkion you are speaking. However, I assume you can understand me?”

“Right-O! Got it in one. Congratulations on winning the annual Ilxian mega-fortune lottery!”

One of the mech's finials slowly fanned out and then cinched back in toward his helm in a way that either meant he was extremely annoyed or very focused. Or both.

"I see. I will ask yes or no questions. Were you able to speak with the mech?"

Wreck-Gar shook his helm affirmatively, keeping his intake shut just in case the warframe was ticked off.

"Is he functional?"

Another yes.

"Is the sparkling he carries functional?"

Wreck-Gar scratched his helm antennae and considered the question. He wasn't really sure. Blurr had mentioned nothing but he had nervously run his servos over his plating several times, babbling to himself so quickly Wreck-Gar hadn't been able to understand.

He settled on shrugging a *'maybe'* at the mech in answer.

"I see." The gunformer stared at the courier for a long moment before he turned and settled his intense optic on Wreck-Gar. "The guards will soon return to dispose of me, and as such my time is limited. I will offer you a deal that will allow you to escape, provided you ensure that the mech in that cell and this sparkling are taken with you. Is this acceptable?"

"Don't miss this one-of-a-time special airing of *'By My Honor By My Word'* a riveting Kalkar production! Affirmative Captain!" Wreck-Gar babbled while nodding his helm *'yes'* to make sure his answer got across.

"Very well." The mech motioned for him to come closer and held out his gun-arm. "Listen carefully. My ability to use my integrated cannon has been rendered nonfunctional by our captors but its power core remains active and *highly* combustible. If properly placed and detonated with an energy blast from a low-power blaster, it would be capable of creating a sufficient distraction needed for an escape."

The mech pried open a panel on the forearm of his gun-arm to pull out its power core, and Wreck-Gar gawked at the quality of it. It was carefully passed through the bars and into the Junkion's servos. "I have also obtained this from our captors during their pitiful attempt to dissect my frame. The laser strength should be high enough to corrode the cell bars and stasis cuffs, though not swiftly."

A laser scalpel was lifted from inside the panel in the warframe's gun-arm where it had been discreetly hidden away. This tool was also passed to the Junkion, and just in time as the guards returned once more, pulling select prisoners from their cells and making their way steadily towards where Wreck-Gar and the two new bots were located. Emotion seemed to begin to seep from the purple mech as his time drew shorter, and he quickly handed over the sparkling as well.

“Three levels above this one there is a small docking bay, there I assume you will find several spacecraft and escape pods. Do not fail to reach them.” Wheelie hissed as he was pulled away, unhappy with being held by an unfamiliar mechanism. The purple mech petted his single servo carefully, somberly over the back of the youngling’s helm.

The shouts and grunts of Quintesson soldiers grew nearer and the warframe flexed and rolled his massive purple shoulders again, twice, three times.

He gazed at Blurr’s unconscious frame.

“If you are able to communicate this to him, inform him that I...” The mech paused, square finials pulling in close to his helm in longing. Or irritation. Wreck-Gar wasn’t sure. “Inform him that I regret the way our last words caused him distress. As an apology all that I can offer, while considering my imminent deactivation, is the logical realization that I must confess; I love him.”

Seeming to settle when the words left him, the purple mech’s plating relaxed flat against his protoform as the guards entered his cell. Wreck-Gar took a surprised and fearful step back when he felt the other mech’s EM field for the first time. The roiling, endless anger that infused the warframe’s field was utterly out of place when he looked at the mech’s outwardly monotone appearance.

Yellow optic focused on the doorway; the mech lowered his helm defiantly, and stepped out into the hall with unsettling confidence.

Wreck-Gar knew then that the power core wouldn’t be the *only* distraction aiding their escape.

Chapter End Notes

I may come back and edit this chapter later since i just busted it out, but i'm happy where its at now :)

Also, g1 wreck-gar would make such a good step dad for poor, poor widow blurr and wheelie/haywire, huh? >;D

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You are very brave. Are you cunning, too? All our lives will depend on you...”

-Watership Down

A low crackling noise and the stench of melted metal lingered on the edges of Blurr's awareness. His optics were unfocused, staring at nothing in particular and only vaguely taking in the cool-blue lit cell. Wreck-Gar, the strange Transformer he'd met earlier, had used a laser scalpel to get into Blurr's cell and was currently kneeling next to Blurr's legs, working on breaking the last set of stasis cuffs around his ankles. The scalpel cut through things fine, but it took so *long*.

Blurr only had a rough idea of what the escape plan was, since his translator had a hard time working through the Junkion's speech pattern. The other mech's words were still being translated in his helm; slowly churned out as new information on his HUD. What stuck with him from what he could understand was the fact that Shockwave had apparently been there and had given up his only way to escape just so Wheelie and Blurr would have a chance. Blurr wasn't sure how to feel about that. The Decepticon had held him captive, but-

'But-who-knows-what-could-be-happening-to-him-now-!' Blurr's fingers twitched fretfully as he worried over it, since his legs were still paralyzed and he couldn't pace the cell the way he wanted to.

The Quintessons had called Shockwave deformed. He doubted Shockwave would be granted the same chance to continue functioning as he had.

Wreck-Gar had tried to tell him something important, something Shockwave had really-really wanted him to know but his translator was having the most trouble with translating it. It was still just a little progress bar loading in the corner of his HUD, inaccessible information that Blurr wanted to know with a burning impatience.

In his lap, Wheelie reached out to grab his twitching fingers.

The sluggishness side effect from the stasis cuffs made it easy to slowly lift Wheelie and bump their helms together. Wheelie was subdued, beeping and warbling softly. His wide blue optics hadn't left Blurr's faceplates since the older bot had woken from stasis.

Worriedly, he checked his sparkling over for injuries since he hadn't gotten the chance to do so before. His pink-stained servos prodded protoform and rotated joints to ensure nothing was damaged or dented or out-of-place. Wheelie gurgled while he was jostled and Blurr gave him a few cautious yet firm pats on the back.

A small portion of half-digested energon goodie was spit back up and smeared across Blurr's windshield.

"Great-great-great..." He muttered, blindly reaching for the mesh cloth he'd found earlier. Wheelie cooed at him blearily, optics struggling to stay online as Blurr wiped himself clean as best he could. The sparkling wouldn't be able to stay awake much longer, since his systems were simply too overwhelmed to do anything more than make him grumpy and try to reboot his processor. Blurr felt guilty about it. His sparkling had been through way-way-way too much.

When his bitlet succumbed to recharge, Blurr balanced him comfortably on top of his chassis, tiny helm nuzzled into the crook of his neck cabling. The warm weight of a small frame combined with soft buzzing from Wheelie's engine was both comfortable and reassuring. Blurr's servos skittered affectionately down his sparkling's back before darting lower to his own midsection. It was hard to determine how Haywire was fairing now that their sparks were no longer nestled next to one another, spinning wildly in a semi-synchronous dance that he very-much-missed.

Now one of the only two indicators that Haywire may be doing okay was a small green dot in the lower corner of his HUD, simply and unhelpfully labeled '*Gestation Tank Status*' with no further details. The other indicator was when Haywire would move around and send vibrations through the racer's thin plating. Blurr hadn't felt that in a while. His servo pressed anxiously, searching for any sign of functioning.

That Quintesson had said Haywire was healthy but Blurr didn't trust those horrible-slimy-nasty aliens one bit.

So absorbed in checking on his newspark, Blurr's didn't notice Wreck-Gar inch closer. He thought he felt something- something like- maybe-maybe-maybe-

His servo pressed harder and then- Blurr smiled, relief flushing through his EM field. Haywire kicked out weakly, causing gentle vibrations and muffled noises. The feeling of his internal mechanisms being jostled by a squirmy bitlet was uncomfortable but he'd take it over that awful-terrible *stillness* any time.

An orange-bronze servo, similar in size to Blurr's and scuffed from extreme wear and tear, settled on his stomach plating and felt along the curve curiously. Blurr's helm snapped up to find that Wreck-Gar had scooted closer, his red optics bright and facial expression rounded in awe.

Before a conscious thought could form in his main processing core, Blurr revved threateningly, the noise nearly loud enough to burst audials.

'No-no-no-no-not-right-definitely-not-definitely-not-right-' He flinched away from the Junkion's touch. It had felt off, out-of-place, and unwanted. In response to the sudden touch, his processor kept re-loading a memory file of something he *did* want, irrationally. A memory of Shockwave's large servo caressing his plating; cold and rough-textured and yet so *careful*.

"Player five gets hit with a foul- excuse me, pardon me." Wreck-Gar blurted, distressed. He scooted away from the carrier and held his servos out placatingly. "The opposing team gets a penalty kick- fair is fair- for all your curiosity itches, visit the Cygnus VII *Emporium of Mysterious Items*, today!"

Blurr cycled deeply through his vents, hot air struggling to disperse from his frame.

"I accept your apology but don't do that again you hear me don't-don't-do-it-" Blurr huffed, now more annoyed than angry. "In fact why would you even do that in the first place it's just rude next time ask first because I do not want any bots touching me and that means definitely not you and not those Quintessons and not any bot except Sh- except S- except-" He clamped his intake shut, embarrassed by what partially slipped out.

Wreck-Gar retrieved the laser scalpel and returned to breaking the cuffs, a rueful smirk on his face that made the mustache on his upper lipplates twitch. "*C'est la vie*. Catch this romantic tale from the murderpit of Derut Four: a gladiator's love guaranteed, or your credits back."

Blurr scoffed and crossed his arms, faceplates glowing with heat. "Oh just keep cutting and mind your own business-!"

The Junkion left him alone after that. Mostly. He sent a few longing glances the racer's way every now and then, which Blurr staunchly ignored.

When the final bit of stasis cuff was broken, Blurr leapt to his pedes. Full energy rushed back to him and his normal hyperactive pacing started up immediately. Wreck-Gar watched, intake gaping in surprise at the racer's blurred movements.

"Fast, fast, fast! Turbo speed included on the all-new model."

"You think this is fast just you wait I'll show you fast but first we have to get out of here so you keep cutting and when we get out I'll get us to the shuttle bay so fast you won't believe it you'll-see you'll-see-"

Wreck-Gar grinned and cut through the bars of the cell that let out into the hallway with as much vigor as he could muster with such a slow device. "Got that right, Chief. Soon like brand new!"

With the Junkion busy, Blurr took a moment to figure out what to do with Wheelie. He didn't have his sling and he couldn't rely on carrying the sparkling around as they escaped, so all that was left was to try and fit Wheelie into a small hollow space Blurr had behind his windshield. He'd never tried to place Wheelie in there before and it was definitely-absolutely a tight fit. Wheelie might have been a minibot, but he was still large for a sparkling and a few of his limbs had to be folded into what must have been uncomfortable positions to get him to fit inside his chassis.

At least, after a brief tantrum and some banging at Blurr's windshield from the inside, the sparkling settled down unhappily.

Feeling more like a ten-ton habsuite complex rather than a mech, Blurr irritably turned back to Wreck-Gar, trying to adjust to all the weight added to his frame.

"Eureka! Sound the bells- everything must go." A few of the cell bars fell to the ground with a clatter as the two mechs escaped through the gap, drawing the attention of previously listless prisoners inside the other cells. Blurr didn't recognize most of their species, but he didn't like the aggressive and jealous looks thrown their way. He especially didn't like it when several prisoners started yelling out, alerting the hulking techno-reptilian guards that waited beyond the stockade exit.

Blurr took one look at the guards' stun guns and made a split-second decision. He lunged forward and wrapped his arms around the Junkion's waist, took a micro-sec to adjust to the other bot's weight and taller height, and then sprinted off with him.

Wreck-Gar yelped in surprise and clung to Blurr as they flew forward. One of his arms wrapped around Blurr's chassis for safety, while the other reached out to rip a gun from a guard's servos when they ran past.

All noise -from Wreck-Gar's wild hollering in his audial while he shot aliens down, to the guard's pained grunts- ceased to register to the racer as he ran with a goal in mind. He had to *focus*. The weight of his sparklings and a full grown mech threatened to slow him down but he pushed himself beyond his limits, spark straining and pedes aching. Hallways and staircases passed beneath his pedes as he nimbly sidestepped soldiers and obstacles, running impossibly fast until he felt Wreck-Gar insistently whack his arm.

Skidding to a stop in an empty hallway, Blurr curtly let go of Wreck-Gar and the other mech stumbled, wobbling on his mismatched knee joints. He turned to Blurr and whistled. His red gaze was heated, looking up and down the speedster's frame appreciatively, lingering on blue hip armor. "Here comes your dream test drive: take a sleek, sexy import with turbo handling for a ride, no credits down..."

Blurr raised an unimpressed brow ridge, left pede tapping impatiently and servos propped on his hips. "No time for that why'd you stop me we gotta go-go-go or else we'll never get out of here and if we never get out of here- mmph!"

Wreck-Gar put a servo over Blurr's intake and shushed him, pointing toward the end of the hallway. His other arm reached into his subspace and withdrew Shockwave's cannon power core. No longer distracted by running, Blurr's sensory crest pinged him with data: there was a large number of electrical signals around the corner, clustered together. If he listened, he could hear the murmur of voices and activity echoing from whatever room lay at the end of the hallway.

He smacked the offending servo off his intake but kept quiet, shooting a scowl at the Junkion before nodding in silent understanding.

Together, they crept down the hallway and peeked beyond the corner.

The hallway apparently split into two main entranceways, both leading to separate docking bays for spacecraft. If Blurr didn't suspect so before, he knew for sure now- they were definitely on a massive command ship, larger than even the biggest Autobot or Decepticon ships he'd seen. The ships in the larger docking bay to the left were the size of a typical Autobot command ship, and his processor quickly ruled out trying to steal one of them. They'd be too much of a hassle to take control of, and besides, the larger bay was swarming with Quintessons that busily moved in and out of the ships.

Inside the bigger docking bay was a high domed ceiling, swathed in grey and green paneling and lit by uniform yellow spotlights. By contrast, the smaller bay on the right side of the hallway was ornate, far less busy, and guarded by a few important looking techno-organics with tentacles. Gold glyphs were inscribed along the arched entranceway, more of the same gibberish symbols. His translator had been working on figuring out the alien language, but so far, he'd only been able to identify a few patterns and some of their alphabet.

"Can-you-read-that?" Blurr asked, tapping Wreck-Gar's shoulder and pointing to the archway.

Wreck-Gar grinned –though it seemed less like a grin and more like a feral mechanical baring its teeth- and wagged his brow ridges. "I talk T.V, change channels to Quintesson news on occasion, for your viewing pleasure."

"Good-" Blurr thought quickly, a plan stitching itself together. They wouldn't be able to take the smaller bay with so many Quintessons inside the larger bay just across the hallway, ready to fall in as backup. "You-wait-here- I'll take this and distract them and when I distract them you go over there and clear out the smaller bay and get a ship ready so we can go-go-go when it's time to go you-got-it?" He took the power core from the Junkion, fingers sliding over its smooth surface nervously.

Wreck-Gar frowned. He tried to catch the courier by the hips, attempting to corral him towards the smaller bay instead. "No can do. Danger on the horizon, Captain. Hold on tight to luggage."

Blurr was not having that, no-way-no-way. "What-did-I-say-about-*touching*-I-said-don't-don't-don't-do-it!" He snapped, slipping away from the Junkion's reach and looking into his red optics determinedly. "I'm going down there and you-can't-stop-me so remember the plan-!"

Spinning on his heel before the Junkion could get a word out, Blurr sprinted into the larger, busier bay. His appearance caused a wave of commotion to spread throughout the Quintesson grunts, but he was far too quick to be caught by their clunky servos. As he darted between their large, sweaty metallic bodies he ripped a blaster from the side of one of them and pivoted on the balls of his pedes to change course.

His new direction was aimed for the open oval-shaped ship entrance, sealed with a hazy green force-field that led directly out into the depths of space. He could see that the force-field generator was located on the section of domed ceiling just above the entrance, but he was blocked from reaching it by all the parked spaceships in his way.

He sprinted dead straight at the ships anyway, raising the power core above his helm and then, with all his built-up momentum, he threw the core over the ships. It didn't matter if the core hit the generator, it just had to be *close enough* when it detonated.

Aiming his blaster at the core as it sailed through the air, Blurr stopped. The aliens behind him were rushing closer but he forced himself to ignore them for the moment. His processor recalled his last memory of Moonracer, with her sniper rifle aimed and soft blue optics dim; focused on her target with a steady, predatory awareness.

Then he fired.

Purple light blinded the room and a helm-wracking *CHOOM* threatened to fry his audials as the power core detonated. The sound of the explosion was cut short when the generator was destroyed along with half of the ceiling and most of the wall. With no force-field barrier to protect it, the bay was exposed to the silent vacuum of space and Blurr froze, white pedes stuttering as he stared through the massive rift that opened into an endless, glittering darkness. Suction pulled ships and Quintessons from the floor and dragged them out into space, and the increased pressure made some of the fleshier Quintessons burst, their gooey bodies popping disgustingly.

Blurr raced against the vacuum, the ship's artificial gravity still functioned but it warred with the suction from space enough to slow him as he sped for the entranceway. Wheelie clawed at his insides; he could feel the sparkling's distressed EM field battering at his while he pushed onward, ignoring the burning scratches that were carved into his internal chassis paneling.

Ahead of him, the emergency blast doors on the bay's entranceway had been activated and were shutting slowly, forcing Blurr to run faster as silent chaos ripped the entire room to shreds around him. He slid past the doors just astro-seconds before they shut, his frame twisting sideways to fit through the gap.

Sound popped into existence out of nowhere and he could hear how his frame was heaving loudly, steam hissing from his vents.

The hallway was empty, as was the smaller docking bay, save for Wreck-Gar. The Junkion gripped a handrail built in along one wall for support, intake gaping in shock.

"Lets." Blurr panted, limping forward. "Go."

Wreck-Gar ran forward and caught him under the arms when he stumbled. The Junkion's foreign EM field was tinged with worry and concerned frustration as he dragged Blurr into the smaller bay. A few soldiers, probably taken down by the Junkion earlier, were laid out around the room. The two bots would be safe for a breem or two, at least until the Quints sent more soldiers to secure the breach.

Blurr had just killed off a lot of them, he really-really-really hoped they didn't have many more.

Blurr was guided to kneel in front of a ship- the only ship there, he realized. The smaller bay was shaped like a crescent-moon, and built into the sides of it were huge egg-like pods.

Escape pods. In contrast, the lone ship was strange to look at; long and thin and twisty. Wreck-Gar left him in front of it and babbled something about starting it up.

Blurr wasn't listening. His servos shook, and he wrapped his arms around his midsection. Wheelie had settled back down and Blurr tried to project *calm-care-safety* through his EM field but he- he couldn't calm himself enough to do it. Something wet and cold slid down his cheeks and dripped from his chin guard, and he touched his face in muted surprise.

He didn't remember reactivating the coolant ducts in his optics.

His frame clattered and shivered, and he cried, tears slipping down his energon-streaked face. He wanted to be done with all of this, it was too-too-too much.

A flicker of emotion that wasn't his or Wheelie's brushed against his EM field. It was tiny, a rudimentary signal that wasn't a fully defined emotion yet. Blurr gasped, arms tightening on his midsection when Haywire's field reached out to him tentatively, radiating a simple sort of happiness. Blurr didn't have much experience with carriage, with most of the bots he'd known along with himself being forged, but the sensation of a mechanism he had created reaching out to him for the first time was something indescribably *amazing*. If only Shockwave were there to feel it as well- Blurr thought.

As if by divine intervention, his translator pinged his HUD with a notification.

[Completed conversation] [Access file?]

The message Shockwave had wanted him to know was finished being translated. Blurr tore open the file, processor reading the words in mere seconds. He could see why it had taken longer to translate, as Wreck-Gar had tried to quote Shockwave's message word-for-word and the Decepticon's speech pattern mixed oddly with the Junkion language.

Shockwave loved him?

That-couldn't-be-right.

Shockwave, who denied all emotion. Shockwave, who threatened to dissect him once he stopped being useful. Shockwave, who-

Before he could form a coherent thought or emotional reaction, Wreck-Gar emerged from the ship. The Junkion took one look at the tears streaking down the courier's dirty face and panicked. He rushed forward, kneeling to wrap his arms around Blurr and tug him into an embrace, soothing his servos across Blurr's kibble and back struts. Blurr was too frazzled to snap at the Junkion for touching him. Instead, he sank into the warm embrace, whining in relief when his aching lower backplates were kneaded gently while Wreck-Gar murmured sweet, reassuring nonsense into his audial.

"Strongest titanium alloy on this side of the Hunfi system-" Wreck-Gar complimented, stroking a servo lightly up the side of Blurr's waist. His red optics were warm. "Buy while supplies last -hurry- this product's *highly desired* in ten solar systems."

Blurr huffed into the Junkion's shoulder, embarrassed and begrudgingly flattered. Wreck-Gar pulled away and held out a servo.

"Revved and ready to fly- one way ticket to Junkion, all interested must apply." The Junkion looked at him expectantly. Blurr stared back, uncertain. Stepping onto that ship would mean committing to the plan that had been put into motion the moment they'd left their cell. It would mean he would not only be escaping this ship, but escaping *Shockwave*. Then he would be free; he could take that ship and fly back to the surface and find those other Cybertronian spark signals. He could leave with Wreck-Gar and explore the universe with him. He could raise his sparklings somewhere safer, somewhere better than a dying, war-torn planet.

Tears fell harder, blurring his optics. He felt like he was making the wrong choice.

He took Wreck-Gar's servo.

--

Chromia was tired of this dirty fragging planet. She was also having a terrible cycle. Actually, she was having a terrible functioning, but that was nothing new.

What *was* new was Greenlight's impromptu confession, one that made Chromia's visual input go red.

"What." She ground out, fists clenching. Alpha Trion, the dramatic old dustbin, had a servo pressed to his chassis in dismay. The rest of Chromia's team had similar reactions around them. They were standing in the middle of Helex when Greenlight chose to do this, on their way to whatever was left of Vos to find some mystical key to Vector Sigma that'd be able to heal Elita One. Chromia was skeptical of the whole plan –it relied on too much religious mysticism for her tastes- but she'd do anything to repair Elita at this point. Their time was running out and with Elita fading faster by the cycle, they couldn't afford to miss this chance.

"I-" Greenlight choked, static obscuring her words. Her blue optics were wide and fragging *guilty*. "I'm so sorry. I made a mistake and I can't hold it in anymore- I didn't find Blurr's frame at the base. I think he might be alive."

"You think, or you know?"

Blurr. Oh Primus. Every strut in Chromia's frame wanted her to transform immediately and drive straight for Iacon –slagging Iacon that took *eight* quartexes to reach with a grounder altmode- and get her annoying speedball back. If there was a chance he was still functioning...

“I know he’s online.” Greenlight’s expression grew more guilty. “I... may have captured one of Shockwave’s seekers recently...”

“*What ?*” The question was asked by multiple bots at once, Chromia loudest among them.

“He’s harmless!” Greenlight protested before Chromia could reprimand her. “I found him crashed on the south side of the city when I was scouting the other cycle. He’s energon deprived, apparently Shockwave’s disappeared and now he’s locked out of the energon reserves or something. He’s so low on fuel he can’t even lift a servo.” She paused, then muttered: “He can still complain, though.”

“Bring him here, I want to question him myself.”

Greenlight fidgeted. Her teardrop shaped finials twitched. Uncharacteristic of her; she usually kept them still. “He’s a little heavy...”

Alpha Trion settled a servo on Chromia’s shoulder pauldron to calm her before she could strangle the green femme. “Firestar will go with you. Greenlight, I am disappointed in you. Such information should not have been withheld, and now Blurr is undoubtedly trapped within Shockwave’s clutches.”

Chromia shook the old mech’s servo off and glared at him.

"Don't touch me." The blue femme snapped, and then turned her glare onto Greenlight.

“I’m more than disappointed; I’m *angry*. You’ve betrayed one of our most vulnerable teammates, you knew there was a chance he was out there and you chose to leave him on his own. You’ve lied and hidden important information from us, and I don’t tolerate *liars*.” Greenlight flinched. Chromia stalked forward and grabbed the femme by a flare in her chassis plating, scowling down at her.

“Get out of here.” Chromia shoved her, and the green femme stumbled back, optics wide. She looked over to where Lancer stood and her faceplates crumpled when the purple femme refused to meet her gaze.

Once Alpha Trion had pulled Elita One's comatose frame from Firestar's truck bed, the red femme rolled in altmode –with no small amount of awkwardness- over to Greenlight’s side. The two of them departed in silence, watched warily by Alpha Trion and Chromia.

“This is a mess.” Chromia hissed once they’d gone, rubbing a servo across her face. Alpha Trion hummed quietly in agreement, frowning down at Elita One's face as he held her.

“Lancer, are you-?” Chromia started, checking in on femme.

‘*Aw slag.*’ The huge femme looked like she was two astro-seconds from crying. Chromia was not the best at dealing with emotions and all... that. She wished, not for the first time, that Elita-One were awake. She was always so skilled at calming bots down; at managing their reactions. There was a reason she’d been their commander and not Chromia.

“I didn’t know- I promise I didn’t.” Lancer cried. Chromia looped an arm around her shoulders and patted her back kibble awkwardly.

“I know you didn’t.” She assured, then sat there for the next joor as Lancer cried, rubbing comforting circles into the taller femme’s back until her arm hurt.

“They are returning.” Alpha Trion announced, unnecessarily, when the shapes of Greenlight and Firestar’s frames became visible at the end of the crumbling road. Chromia shot him a sour look.

“I can see that.” She paused, audial sensitivity rising. “And *hear* it.”

A loud screeching echoed down the deserted city street, and a rough voice could be heard complaining.

“Careful!” The seeker yowled, clutching a wing and shifting uncomfortably in Firestar’s Autobot sized truck bed. “You’re damaging my wings!”

“Well you’re damaging my *back*.” Firestar replied. The loud screeching Chromia had heard was the sound of Firestar’s undercarriage scraping the asphalt, her frame buckling under the Decepticon’s weight. “It’s not my fault you’re so heavy.”

“How dare you insinuate-” The seeker hissed. “-insinuate that *I* am heavy. I’ll have you know I weigh less than the entire elite trine. Air commander Starscream *wishes* he were-”

“Pretty sure I didn’t insinuate anything, I outright said you’re heavy. Maybe I should have said humongous. Gigantic.” Firestar griped. “Probably heavier than Megatron.”

The seeker let out a horrible yowl-screech and his servos clenched and unclenched weakly, unable to tear Firestar to shreds as he so obviously wished to do.

“You ugly little ground pounder, I should-”

“You should shut up.” Chromia barked, pointing her blaster directly at his face. The seeker blinked in surprise. He must have really been low on fuel to have not even noticed that Firestar had reached her team and pulled to a stop. Greenlight shuffled guiltily beside them, optics on the ground.

The seeker sneered, his lipplates pulling back to reveal jagged denta. He looked like scrap compared to the last time Chromia had seen him. The trine leader had been all liquid vibrant red and shiny, waxy plating back at the energon warehouse. Now he was scuffed and dull, riddled with acid rain marks.

“Must have really ticked Shockwave off, to get thrown out.” Chromia drawled, observing his frame with a disgusted look. The seeker’s face was unusually expressive, unable to control his reactions as he slipped closer to starvation. His optics went wide in distressed embarrassment, facial plating rounding out into something younger and vulnerable.

Then he glared. “I didn’t get thrown out.” He denied. “And nice try, but I’m not telling *you* anything.”

Chromia stared at him, expression inscrutable.

Slowly, she reached into her subspace and withdrew an energon cube. The seeker bit his lipplates and looked away. Then back to the cube. Then away again.

“Fine.” The seeker hissed in frustration as he caved after a few moments of tense staring. “The senile old fool’s disappeared, or offlined, or gone into one of his periods of isolation. I don’t know and I *don’t care* anymore because I’ve got bigger problems- there are aliens out to get me and I haven’t recharged or fueled in cycles and-”

‘*Primus.*’ He could almost give Blurr a run for his credits.

“-Aliens?” Chromia cut in, concerned as she approached the seeker, tilting his helm back to pour the contents of the cube down his intake. He glared at her as she did so.

“Intruders? Within our atmosphere?” Alpha Trion asked as well, worried. It was an emergency if Shockwave was truly offline; there was a reason Elita’s team had never tried to offline him these past million kilocycles. Tactically speaking, it was unwise to kill him. Shockwave was a screwed up slagger, but even Chromia could admit that he managed Cybertron’s security extremely well, and took his appointment as *Guardian of Cybertron* seriously. He was hypervigilant, obsessively rooting out any weaknesses in the holographic field and automated weaponry that surrounded the planet like a net, and his technology was advanced and highly efficient. Pit, Chromia had even seen Shockwave use his altmode to personally shoot down intruding ships from the atmosphere. The mech was *committed*. If he had offlined, then the Autobots had very little hope of ever learning the codes he used to control his security systems, and the planet was now vulnerable to attack from alien races. “What did they look like?”

“I don’t know.” The seeker replied, frightened. He no doubt understood the gravity of the situation as well. “They broke through a gap in our defense system over Polyhex several deca-cycles ago- all I saw was their ships and I didn’t recognize the make. They’re... impractically shaped. Thin and twisted, longer lengthwise.”

“No...” Alpha Trion muttered, ancient optics dimming in fear. “It could not be.”

“You know who they are?” Chromia pressed.

“I sincerely hope it is not as I suspect, but if it is, then it appears the Quintessons have returned to Cybertron.”

“They’re a myth.” Chromia protested, old enough to remember stories of the conquerors who had supposedly once ruled their planet.

“What are Quintessons?” Lancer piped up, curious. Even the seeker turned his helm to look at the ancient mech, waiting for his answer. They were too young to even know the myths.

“‘*Myth.*’” Alpha Trion echoed, bitter. “If only that were true. I lived during their rule, suffered under their care. They are a cruel race, and they hate us senselessly.”

“Why?” Lancer asked.

Chromia groaned internally, preparing herself for the long-winded explanation Alpha Trion was definitely about to give.

“Near the beginning of Primus’s attempts to forge life, before our species was created, he experimented in merging organic and technological forms, and thus the Quintessons were born. They were faulty- far too cruel and possessing a nature which could only consume, and never give. They stripped our planet of its resources time and time again, and were able to bring Primus back from the brink of death by fueling his spark with energy obtained from stars. This action triggered a process of regeneration every time- forcibly reconstructing Primus’s frame; cyberforming our planet. Growing weary of the cycle of near death and rebirth, Primus created a new race, *us*, to displace the Quintessons.”

Alpha Trion shook his helm. “It did not go as planned. The Quintessons enslaved us, *all* of us; warbuild and domestic build, groundframe and flightframe. It was only when I, and my companion Beta, rebelled with our fellow Transformers that we were able to purge them from our planet. They have not forgiven this, and they have likely returned to take back from us what we have stolen.”

“We will need as many mechs as possible to help fight back and eject them from our planet before their hold grows too strong- tell me, if fueled, would you be capable of flying to Iacon to ascertain whether Shockwave functions?” Alpha Trion pressed.

“And Blurr.” Chromia cut in, insistent. “Do you remember seeing a blue courier model?”

“I could but I’m locked out of his tower, remember?” The seeker hissed, then his expression morphed into one of disgust. “And yes, Shockwave had a *pet*. A pretty courier-racer model, or at least Shockwave thought so. Last I saw, the old lech couldn’t tear his optic away- *obsessed*- even had the bot trained to come and go at his beck and call.”

The Autobots collectively flinched, and Chromia’s fuel tank felt as if it’d been twisted into knots, her servos clenched into fists tight enough to make her metal palms creak. Blurr and *Shockwave*. The thought of the speedster being at the mercy of the mad scientist, possibly being forced to-

“Was there a sparkling there as well?” She made herself ask through grit denta. Wheelie’s offlining could also be in question; Greenlight’s frame was shaking in distress in the corner of her vision.

“A sparkling?” The seeker asked, surprised. “No, I didn’t see one. I wouldn’t put it past Shockwave to try and *make* one, however, with the way he-”

“Don’t joke!” Chromia barked, and the seeker’s intake snapped shut.

“I’ll go with Nacelle to Iacon and help him break into the tower.” Greenlight burst, stepping forward. “I’m light enough for him to carry. This is my fault; I should be the one to help get Blurr back.”

“Break into the tower?” Nacelle -Chromia hadn’t really cared to learn his designation- cried in indignation. “What makes you think you can get in if I can’t get in?”

“We break into Shockwave's stuff all the time.” Greenlight replied, shrugging. The rest of the female Autobots nodded and muttered in agreement. Shockwave was excellent at large scale planetary defense but his attention to detail for building security was... lacking. It was ridiculous, but a good weak spot to exploit.

“I’m good with that plan.” Chromia grunted, holstering her blaster. “You two will head to Iacon and we’ll stay on course to Vos. Once Elita One is repaired, we’ll meet back with you in Iacon and hopefully,” She could not believe she was saying this. “We can form a truce with Shockwave- at least to take down the Quintessons.” If they got there and she found that Shockwave had so much as touched an inch of Blurr's frame, she would put down the Decepticon, *personally*, as soon as the Quintessons were dealt with.

She was torn by warring desires; between turning their entire team around and heading back north to Iacon, or staying on course to get help for Elita. She felt relief that Greenlight was taking responsibility, but she couldn’t help but want to get Blurr back herself. It was tactically unwise- it’d take longer for them to get there if Chromia went, as Nacelle could not carry her. But... part of her was also grateful that she could continue their journey to Vos.

She looked to where Elita One was held, limp, in Alpha Trion's arms.

She wanted the femme that she loved to survive and she wanted to be there to ensure that she did get help. A wave of exhaustion came over her; this whole situation had become far more complicated than it already was.

“A truce? I’d rather kill that one-opticked menace than work with him again! And what makes you think I’ll ally myself with a bunch of *Autobots*? ” Nacelle cried and Alpha Trion, for once, took notice of Chromia’s increasingly exhausted patience and instead of immediately taking control of the situation, he politely offered her an out.

“Chromia. Elita One may need to be refueled soon, would you like to do the task? I can take this from here, if you wish.” He asked, shifting his creation in his arms.

“Sure.” Chromia sighed. She would let the old mech hammer out the details of Nacelle and Greenlight’s mission, her helm was starting to hurt from dealing with the Decepticon.

The seeker continued to argue loudly with Alpha Trion as Chromia walked further down the street to find somewhere quieter to check over Elita. He argued a lot for a bot that had spilled his entire story for a cube of energon, Chromia doubted he’d put up a fuss for much longer once he got his servos on some more fuel. Whatever they had to do to ensure that he would work with them, Chromia didn’t care. All that mattered now was surviving, and making sure their plans went right.

Shrugging his shoulders, his tentacles relaxed from their stiff position. The trials were going well this cycle. No delays. But of course, they had never gone badly nor had delays before. Things were as usual, though the next trial was sure to be an interesting one.

The Quintesson Prosecutor shifted on his podium, leaning forward ever-so-slightly to get a closer glimpse of their next defendant as he was brought into the courtroom.

It was one of the flight-capable warframe models, the Prosecutor noted with delight, though his flight thrusters were rendered useless by the blockers clamped around his pedes. Warframes always put up the most amusing fights, unlike their whiney domestic model counterparts. The Transformer that was ushered in appeared quite intimidating to behold at first glance; tall *and* broad, heavily armored, and well equipped with integrated weaponry. All the signs that pointed toward a powerful and *expensive* alternate mode. What a shame that he was so disfigured, his helm and servos obviously having been replaced with poor-quality alternatives.

'Incredible.' The Prosecutor thought. *'You leave a species alone for a few million centuries and they invent the oddest new methods of maiming one another.'*

Torture was all well and good, but permanently damaging stock was never smart. It was just bad business management.

The defendant was brought to the sharkticon pit, his helm turned down subtly to peer at the beasts below. The only sign of his discomfort was a quick swivel of one of his audial fins. He raised his yellow optic to stare, expressionless, at the Judge.

"Before his Imperial Majesty delivers a verdict, would you like to beg for your life?" The Prosecutor inquired, his standard question, though he did add: "I would not recommend it, as it would not help in your predicament."

The mechanism below shifted his helm to examine the Prosecutor.

"Is there a purpose behind this farce, or is this merely egotistical indulgence?" He rasped, monotone, and the Prosecutor noticed that his vocalization unit sounded old. How lucky they were, to finally exterminate a vermin which had lived for far too long on *their* planet.

"Silence." The Judge reprimanded from behind the Prosecutor. "Slaves do not speak."

The Transformer stiffened. "I am not a slave, and certainly I will not defer to you in any respect."

"You deny, but you are." The Judge replied. "Cybertron belongs to Quintessa, and as such, so do the Transformers. Your race has forgotten but you will remember soon."

Straightening his broad purple shoulders, the Transformer stared at them eerily, yellow optic glowing brighter.

“Cybertron is under my guardianship, by appointment legally recognized by the Galactic Council-”

Both the Judge and the Prosecutor cackled.

“The Galactic Council has no jurisdiction over our movements. You are at the mercy of our law: of our Truth. I will deliberate over your fate, now.” The Judge retreated deeper into the shadows on his higher dais, faces spinning while he murmured to himself.

“What logic is there in performing this trial when the verdict is always the same? Do not waste my time with nonsense.” The Transformer stepped closer to the edge of the pit, as if impatient. The Prosecutor wiggled his tentacles in surprise at the odd reaction to impending death.

“Logic? What a primitive Transformer notion. Logic has no place next to Truth.” The Prosecutor responded. “The Truth is that your species is a plague, an infestation that erroneously believes itself sentient and equal to other life. Your species is a mistake that should have never been, but we will fix our shared Creator’s mistakes, as we always have.”

“Shared-?” The Transformer inquired, but then shook his helm and changed subject. He talked too much for a warframe, the Prosecutor noted disappointedly. He had been hoping for more *action* during this trial. “What is to happen to my companion? The courier model?”

“Your mate?” The Prosecutor mocked, tentacles wriggling in delight. “He will be quite useful, supplying us with *many* new slaves.”

Perhaps this information would push the Transformer into an entertaining attempt at violent retaliation? The blockers around his pedes ensured he was flightless and emitted a low stasis pulse to weaken his frame. He was harmless, though he would be amusing nonetheless. The Prosecutor watched his reaction eagerly but was disappointed. The Transformer’s optic flickered, going abruptly dark, then unnervingly bright while he swayed in place as if dizzy from some overwhelming, despairing emotion. How pathetic. Uninteresting. *Boring*.

The Judge came forward on his dais, and the Prosecutor collected himself. “What is the Imperial Magistrate’s verdict?”

“Innocent.” One of the Judge’s red faces intoned. The sharkticons sloshed around faster in their pit at the verdict, excited.

“I am going to dispose of you, and your ship.” The Transformer informed them, monotone voice dipping into a colder tone. He stepped even closer to the edge of the pit. “Soon.”

The Judge’s tentacles curled in amusement where they draped on the floor. “Certainly.”

Then, unprompted by the guards behind him, the defendant stepped off the ledge and plunged down into the pit, where the sharkticons descended upon his fat flightless frame to tear it to shreds.

‘How disappointing.’ The Prosecutor sighed. Perhaps the next trial would fare better.

Chapter End Notes

blurr's love interest choices here are like:

shockwave: My Apologies For Knocking You Up And Holding You Captive. I Am In Love With You Btw.

wreck-gar: dam your sexy haha. wanna come live on my junk planet

Might come back and edit this one, several parts of it frustrated me so bad. But omg! I can't believe this fic is so long, I feel like I've barely written anything. I'm getting close to the end of my plan for this fic and I just want to say thanks to everyone who's kept up with this so far ;) <3

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

OP and Megatron are definitely going to be confused when they wake up

“Peace through superior firepower!”

-Star Trek

Water -a primitive, organic substance- rushed around his frame as he plunged into the pit, clustered bubbles of air rising around him and obscuring his vision.

His frame was not assailed for several long moments and the lag in reaction left him off-kilter and on edge, waiting for the Quintesson beasts to attack. When their sharp denta finally did meet his plating, the sensation burned and sliced through his neural net with surprising agony, which he forced himself to focus through. He sacrificed his useless gun-arm to further his plan, using it to swat the techno-aquatic creatures off his more vital frame parts, leaving his pedes purposefully unguarded and his gun-arm mangled beyond repair. Taking the opening, the creatures latched onto his legs, ripping and cutting through not only his thick plating, but the dampener cuffs on his ankles as well.

Murky green water sloshed around him as he waited and fended off the creatures. The liquid battered his finials with sensory data and sent his external sensors into disarray.

He felt it when the blockers were corroded into useless strips of metal, and his HUD supplied him with a message:

[Thrusters: Enabled]

Activating them immediately, the rapid heating caused by his flight thrusters igniting made the water around him boil, charring the closest of his attackers and melting away the organic parts of their abominable frames. He rose through the water and burst from its surface, liquid sloughing from his armor.

The reptilian Quintesson guards were frozen by their surprise when he landed outside the pit, and he used it to his advantage, reaching out and grasping one by the neck and yanking hard, throwing it into the other guard and knocking them both into the pit.

Up on the dais, the Quintesson Judge's tentacles coiled in shock. "Prosecutor, call in more Allicons." It ordered its lackey on a lower podium, the one who had tentacles in place of arms and an elongated skull. The Judge's faces clicked and whirred from red to yellow. "Force him into the pit!"

More guards came and he met them with relentless force. Now that he knew to avoid their stun weapons, he was able to focus on tearing apart their disgusting bodies without being knocked unconscious. He avoided using his altmode—he had a later purpose for that in mind—and instead used his fist and mangled arm to force his way through his attackers, heading for the dais.

Something flashed along the edge of his field of vision, pink and impossibly quick. He had not the time to focus on it and his processor dismissed it as a non-threat, especially when several of the Allicons were killed by the pink intruder as it wound its way around the edges of the large room.

Thrusters powering to life once more, he launched himself at Judge's dais but was blocked as the Prosecutor's floating podium darted out and intercepted him. He caught himself on its thin railing and clambered on.

The Prosecutor bared its primitive yellow denta at him, snarling while it trembled in the shadow of his massive frame. It had one of the stun weapons wound in its tentacles, leveled at him. The creature raised its tentacle as if to shoot but he lashed out quicker and knocked it from its grasp, sending the weapon flying over the railing.

Rage like he had never felt before clouded his processor, stronger and more potent than any simulation or memory of the emotion could feel. It fueled his actions as he grasped the back of the Quintesson's elongated silvery-green helm in his large servo. Metal creaked and whined between his fingers when he raised the Prosecutor from the floor of the podium to bring their helms closer together.

The Quintesson writhed and cried out, red optics bright and panicked.

"You wished to provoke a violent reaction from me earlier, for your entertainment." Shockwave noted, deceptively calm as his grip tightened. The possibility that his- that Blurr could have been forced to endure the attentions of these pathetic aliens was revolting.

"No, no, I-" The Prosecutor babbled, and Shockwave tilted his helm to the left, curious.

"This is what you desired, is it not?" His fingers slowly crushed through the alien's thin helm plating and energon dribbled out, staining its white-green helm with lines of pink. "Indulge yourself."

In one move, he clenched his fist and the Prosecutor's long helm burst like an overripe organic fruit. Thick chunks of its ropey pink organic processor escaped its metal skull, and

Shockwave peered inside curiously. It seemed that its brain module had grown to fit the shape of its helm. How... primitively fascinating. He was momentarily distracted from his rage when the instinct to observe and dissect and explore overtook him. Scientific curiosity had him use his fingers to pry the creature's helm further open, its still-attached body convulsing with the instinctive electrical aftershocks of deactivation.

“Shockwave-!”

The Prosecutor's greying frame dropped from his servo instantly and he turned to find that the Quintesson leader had a pink bot held captive in its tentacles. A blaster was leveled at the bot's helm, and Shockwave struggled to figure out who the mech was for half a klik before he spotted the distinctive crest on his helm. Drenched in energon, Blurr stared at him with wide, fearful optics as the Quintesson's tentacles curled across his frame and held him still. His elongated shoulder pauldrons heaved with visible exhaustion, pedes kicking against the Quintesson's hold with a weak fraction of their usual strength.

Blurr had come for him, he realized.

Shockwave's spark sent signals to his processor, completely unhindered, as it seized with distress.

Blurr had come for him, Shockwave thought again. His spark spun with inappropriate joy that warred with his distress. His processor lagged from the overwhelming and conflicting emotional input.

Shockwave stepped forward, struts tightening as he prepared to transform but the Quintesson pressed his blaster harder to Blurr's helm and tutted. Its helm whirred, and its smiling green face watched him with an amused glint in its optics. “Don't come any closer. One shot and he and your progeny will die.”

He stilled, reluctantly.

“Good.” The Quintesson wriggled its tentacles in what Shockwave assumed was pleasure. Blurr's facial plating cringed in disgust as he was subsequently wriggled on.

“Let-me-go-let-me-go-let-me-go-right-now-!” Blurr babbled, shrill. “Don't-touch-don't-touch-I-definitely-completely-absolutely-do-not-want- *mpphmpph*-!”

Blurr's words were muffled as the Quintesson wrapped a tentacle around his intake. He cringed, optics narrowed into blue slits while he audibly gagged from whatever disgusting taste had been forced into his intake.

“Defective.” The Quintesson muttered. Its yellow face opticked Blurr assessingly. “No matter. Glitches are always sorted out by the fourth generation of offspring.”

Blurr gave the alien a glare and a particularly spiteful kick to the side of its egg-body.

“Release him, and leave my planet.” Shockwave demanded. “Or perish as punishment for trespassing.”

“Your planet?” The Quintesson glared down at him, and Shockwave used the alien’s momentary distraction to subtly turn his helm to look to Blurr as the alien began some nonsensical rant about the *true* ownership status of Cybertron.

He stared hard at Blurr and, unsure of how to convey his message without active comms or a face to make facial expressions, Shockwave very deliberately flared his helm finials outward. Then, he snapped them back inward with a vicious *clack!* The Quintesson seemed to ignore it, too caught up in its self-important monologue to care. Blurr stared back at him, utterly confused while Shockwave repeated the gesture, adding in a slight jerk of his helm.

After several clicks, understanding visibly dawned on his face. Shockwave felt a momentary surge of pride.

Blurr’s side-opticked the alien for a klik, then glanced back to Shockwave with a determined look. He braced himself- then bit down on the tentacle around his intake with enough strength that his denta sliced through its soft metal flesh and audibly *clacked!* together when he tore straight through.

The alien jerked, pain distracting it and causing it to lower the blaster.

Shockwave transformed into his altmode faster than the Quintesson could react. It got a single scream out before its frame was completely disintegrated by a blast of purple light and heat. Shockwave’s gun-arm may have been nonfunctional, but his altmode relied upon power generated from his spark, and thus was unaffected by the lack of power core. He made sure – despite how strongly he wished to use more– to only use a mere fraction of his potential power. He had a later plan for which his altmode would be crucial, and he needed as much of his strength as possible to complete it.

Tumbling from the raised dais, since the Quintesson’s frame was no more but its severed tentacles remained wrapped around him, Blurr plummeted toward the ground. Shockwave took off from the platform, transforming midair to catch the racer.

“Oof-!” Blurr’s vents wheezed when he was caught against Shockwave’s chassis. “Get-it-off-Shockwave-get-it-off-could-you-get-it-off-get-it-off-please-please-please-get-it-off-now-could-you-get-it-off-”

Shockwave allowed his thrusters to power off gradually, slowly dropping them to the floor level as the Quintesson grunts scattered from the room, no doubt searching for whatever new Quintesson in their chain of command that had just been promoted to leader. Blurr thrashed in his arms, fighting futilely against the cold tentacles still around him. Touching down on the floor, he carried the slim racer in the crook of his mangled gun-arm while his servo tore the fleshy, yet interestingly firm, tentacles from Blurr’s frame.

Once freed, he set Blurr onto his pedes and stepped away, unsure if his touch would agitate the carrier further. Blurr wobbled in place. The machinery within his pedes and lower legs were *smoking*, Shockwave realized. He was overtaxed. Run down. Far too much stress had been placed on the carrying bot.

Blurr’s shoulder pauldrons heaved, vents blasting hot air.

“Tears?” Shockwave rasped, startled.

His servo raised and hovered over Blurr’s cheek; thumb poised to wipe the tears that streaked down Blurr’s facial plating, but hesitant to touch. “May I?”

The courier shuddered and pushed his helm into the palm of Shockwave’s waiting servo, blue optics sliding shut with exhaustion.

“You returned for me.” Shockwave wiped away the pink grime and lubricant that marred white facial plating. “I had thought you would take the chance to be free. The Junkion did aid your escape and find you a ship, as he promised?”

Blurr ignored Shockwave's questions to ask his own, his speech even faster than was usual for him. “You-let-me-go-and-you-left-Wreck-Gar-with-a-message-and-I-wasn't-sure-if-it-was-translated-correctly-since-it-could-have-been-translated-incorrectly-and-If-it-was-incorrect-and-I-left-then-I-would-have-never-known-what-you-actually-said-so-I-couldn't-have-left-because-I-have-to-know-I-have-to-ask-did-you-say-it-did-you-mean-it-doyouloveme?”

His servos shot out and gripped Shockwave's wrist, anxious fingers tapping purple metal.

“I am uncertain, in truth, of the exact nature of the emotions I feel.” Shockwave responded slowly, carefully neutral. “I have not experienced them for millennia; they were irrelevant to me- a hindrance to my work, a *weakness* that could be exploited. I used logic to suppress such weakness. Logic is what drove me in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in order to achieve scientific advancement, and so I functioned without regard to sentiment until our paths crossed.”

Bending over, he lowered his helm to Blurr’s purposefully, gradually, until their forehelms were pressed to one another. His own inelegant approximation of a kiss. “The error of my previous approach to functioning is now apparent: Logic is the beginning of wisdom, yes, but wisdom is the beginning of love.”

Blurr threw his arms around the scientist’s shoulders, their helms still flush.

“You could have said that faster if you had just said *yes-yes-yes- !*” He complained, yet his EM field burst against Shockwave’s with vivid relief and joy.

“Yes.” Shockwave answered, his servo slipping around the courier’s helm to cup the back of it as he nuzzled his helm against Blurr’s, luxuriating in the feeling of the bot of his newfound desires finally ensconced within his arms.

His courier melted in his embrace, legs giving out until Shockwave was the only thing supporting him.

“What injuries have you sustained? Your pedes...?” Shockwave inquired, concerned as his servo slipped down to pet along Blurr's back struts. “How is Haywire? Where is Wheelie?”

“Haywire’s-fine-now-but-he-didn’t-take-the-stun-blast-well-but-Wheelie’s-in-here-see-see-see?” He tapped his windshield, and Shockwave could spot a blob of orange through the tinted glass. Not an ideal place to carry the sparkling, but it would be sufficient for now. The Quintesson’s had confiscated the new sling Shockwave had created when he’d been taken aside earlier and separated for... *examination*. They must have, without a doubt, thrown the sling into a trash incinerator or something similar.

The touch of cold Quintesson scalpels on his plating still lingered, ghostly touches stinging the ancient welds along the base of his helm whenever he was still for too long. He resisted the echoes in his processor as much as he was able— focusing instead on the present moment, and the bot in front of him.

Their helms had remained intimately close and Shockwave could not bring himself to separate them. The sensation of their plating held flush was far more meaningful than anything he’d ever experienced.

Shockwave shuddered, large finials quivering when Blurr’s thin lipplates brushed the smooth expanse of metal beneath his single optic when he spoke.

“My-pedes-are-broken-busted-out-of-order I don’t think I can run and if I can’t run I don’t know how we’ll get out of here and if we can’t get out of here we-!” The bot’s speech devolved into a panicked jumble.

Shockwave bent over to hook his mangled gun-arm beneath Blurr’s knee joints while his servo wrapped under Blurr’s shoulders, hefting the slight-framed racer into a conjunx-carry. “Direct me toward the shuttle bay, and I will see to the rest of our escape. Continuing to run in your state would be illogical.”

Kicking weakly, Blurr glared. “I can walk I’m not that injured if I was injured I wouldn’t be able to walk but I’m not injured so let me down I can pull my own weight-”

“I do not doubt your capabilities, but it would be neglectful to allow an overtaxed, injured, carrying mechanism to continue to exert themselves. Do you not agree?”

Blurr scowled and looked away. He muttered something in a vaguely agreeing tone.

The sleekness of the speedster’s helm was exaggerated in his side profile. Long sweeps of a unique crest paired with the angularity of his features were captivating and Shockwave leaned closer, helpless to the urge to touch, nuzzling his flat helm along the curve of a thin cheek and then lower, to sloping neck cabling.

A high whine from Blurr’s engine met his audials as the other bot turned back to him, winding his arms around Shockwave’s neck. Exhaustion and acceptance finally made Blurr go limp; pliantly sweet, his helm on Shockwave’s shoulder and lipplates grazing the Decepticon’s right finial. Desire —completely inappropriate given their current location— burned through Shockwave’s spark. The svelte shape of the bot pressed to his chassis, along with the attractive curve in abdominal plating that distorted the lines of Blurr’s frame for all to see the new life *Shockwave* had put there, caused his struts to weaken and his interface panel to heat.

“We must go.” Shockwave pulled away.

Fatigue apparent, Blurr’s engine rumbled in displeasure. Pink-stained servos grasped at Shockwave clingily as he was rearranged until he was mainly supported in the crook of a gun-arm. Shockwave examined the other bot critically. Blurr’s exhaustion was different from when he had been suffering from spark overcharge all those quartexes ago. *This* was merely the exhaustion of an overtaxed bot, stress-activated carrier programming leaving the speedster vulnerable and seeking out the closest source of safety; the sire of his sparkling.

Using his now free servo to pick up a discarded stun blaster that’d been abandoned beside the techno-aquatic infested pit, Shockwave was more than capable of protecting the three mechanisms in arms. Certainly, he did not expect it to be a difficult escape now that he was free of those infernal dampener cuffs, and the Quintesson high command had been eradicated.

True to his suspicions, the corridors of the massive ship were largely empty.

Almost too empty, but he had no explanation for it.

“Shockwave-!” Blurr warned, peering over the Decepticon’s shoulders. Shockwave turned and spotted four Allicons rushing down the wide hallway, weapons raised and poised to fire. Several well-placed stun blasts swiftly incapacitated two of them but the remaining escaped Shockwave’s reach. He pursued, wary of allowing them to spread the news of their location, but they scurried through a small row of open ventilation grates and into another section of the ship before he could stop them.

“Miserable glitches.” Shockwave muttered, lowering his blaster and trudging back to the hallway Blurr had directed him to take to the shuttle bay.

A strange, stuttering-sputtering sound rose from his arms, looping on itself. Shockwave looked down in concern, only to find that Blurr was *laughing*. His sped-up vocalizer distorted his chortles into oddly endearing bursts of discordant noise.

“What?” He inquired, and Blurr’s chortles increased.

“You-you-you-” His words devolved into nonsense as he laughed harder, ducking to hide his smile against the Decepticon’s purple plating.

Shockwave’s left finial flicked back in confusion. He decided to move on from the interaction, attributing the odd behavior to the frazzled carrier programming muddling Blurr’s processor.

As he crept down the hallways, battle protocols on alert and supplying his HUD with analyses and observations, Shockwave felt the silence between himself and the courier keenly. Though different from Blurr’s silence in the mass transit system, it still felt unnatural to be in the speedster’s presence and not be inundated by some long, rambling rant.

“You are... *pink*.” Shockwave observed in an attempt to encourage Blurr to speak, his distaste for the color seeping into his vocalizer. It made Blurr look far too similar to his former leader,

the vicious Elita One. Such a gruesome shade had no place on a bot such as Blurr, and Shockwave was curious as to how the bot had become so thoroughly drenched in it.

Blurr grimaced, nasal ridge crinkling. "It's-a-long-long-long-story."

When no story was forthcoming, Shockwave suggested. "Recount it to me?"

Blurr's helm lolled on his shoulder, optics dim. "Those stun blasts don't work on me so I woke up while we were unloading from a shuttle but Haywire was still offline and a-strange-odd-weird-line-of-code activated when I couldn't feel him and I escaped and ran-" It was without a doubt the moment the carrier protocols must have activated, Shockwave thought privately. "-so-so-so- fast and they tried stop me but somehow I ran even faster at them and when I hit them they-"

Blurr paused, struggling to describe what'd happened. "-Burst-! Popped-splattered-everywhere-and-I-mean-everywhere-!"

Shockwave's finials perked with interest. While it was disgusting that Blurr was covered in techno-organic energon, the speed that he must have achieved to accomplish such a brutal act... "How fast were you running?"

"I-don't-know-I-don't-know-!" Blurr answered, optics wide with earnest shock. "My-speedometer-broke."

Shockwave stilled. The average hovercar's speedometer capped at around 300 clicks per joor, though he was certain Blurr's stopped at 600 clicks per joor. Faster than that and the speedster would have been approaching supersonic speed.

How... "*Impressive.*"

Blurr raised his chin with pride and met Shockwave's gaze, his arms looped around the Decepticon's shoulders. "I know it is you should have seen it I didn't realize that I could go that fast but now that I- oh wait-wait-wait Shockwave look-!"

He jerked to a halt, helm swiveling to look where Blurr pointed.

The walls of the Quintesson ship were made of a green-tinted metal, and whether the shade was a result of paint or of time he was unsure, but the color made the golden engravings along the walls appear quite optic-catching. He could not decipher the graven images that Blurr pointed to frantically. Some seemed familiar, while others were too alien to recognize.

"Do you know what it means?"

"Of course I do I figured it out haven't you figured it out it's right-there-on-the-wall-"

Shockwave hummed, looking more carefully. He was unsure why Blurr had sidetracked their escape for *this*, but surely the courier had a logical reason for it. "I do not possess a translator. Explain this to me?"

“They know something that could help Cybertron it says it right here- Shockwave do you remember the Alpha-Trion file I read-? It's like that story see there's the symbol for Cybertron- right-there-right-there-” He pointed to a semicircular shape. “And those are the Quintessons and their ships and that's a star I'm not sure which star but see how the planet transforms-?” The symbol for Cybertron was repeated several times along the wall in a linear progression, and each step down the hallway revealed another depiction of the planet shifting and unfolding into something new.

The last panel depicted a Cybertron that was transformed into a round mech-like shape, similar to a shell split in two, as a star was absorbed into the center of its frame. Once the star was absorbed, the planet was drawn as a whole, completely circular symbol. *Restored*. Off to the side of the scene was an engraved Quintesson Judge, watching over the process. “-And that Quintesson's holding something but I can't figure out what it is but it looks familiar like it's some kind of a-”

“*Key*.” Shockwave blurted, surprised recognition making his wiring go cold. “The key to Vector Sigma.”

“What's Vector Sigma-?” Blurr asked, helm tilted curiously.

“You do not know? You were forged, were you not?”

“Yes but that doesn't mean I know what Vector Sigma is-” Blurr looked away, ashamed, though he needn't be. “Were-you-forged-?”

“No.” Shockwave responded, bluntly. “I was constructed for a menial purpose.”

He thought for a moment, finials swiveling, then he tacked on: “Menial for a warframe.” before quickly moving on from the subject.

“Vector Sigma is the supercomputer that lies near the core of Cybertron. Its purpose is to store all Cybertronian knowledge, and to generate new codebases for hotspots to utilize during the production of forged mechanisms.” Shockwave knew, from his exposure to Blurr's thoughts and memories during their spark merge, that he considered himself a glitch, an abnormality; *forged incorrectly*.

Shockwave found such thoughts illogical. Vector Sigma was the culmination of millions of kilocycles of wisdom, and a machine tasked with carefully producing and cultivating CNA and codebases for every forged generation of their race. It did not make *mistakes*.

“So the Quintessons found a way to re-cyberform Cybertron by using that key so what if we found it and Cybertron was fixed and then we wouldn't have to leave and then-!”

“The key is lost. It has always been lost, even before my construction it was more myth than history.” Shockwave looked away from the bot in his arms to observe the engravings once more, shoulders tense and EM field pensive. “Though, I have never put my efforts toward finding the key. Perhaps if we returned to my laboratory in Iacon...”

“If any bot could find it it would be you- you could find it I know you could Shockwave.” Blurr's fingers tightened where they clasped behind the Decepticon's neck cabling, optics wide and earnest.

Humming in vague agreement, Shockwave left the engravings behind and set them back on track. “We will see.” Their chances of finding the key were astronomically low, yet he could not deny the tentative hope that crept from his spark and filled his processor with the impossible *want* for a way to save their dying planet.

A smooth windshield pressed itself to Shockwave's chassis and rumbled against him, powerful engine purring as Blurr's optics half-shuttered. “Sure-sure-sure but we'll find it we-will-we-will for sure and also you need take this next right turn-”

Shockwave followed the courier's direction, servo tightening on the alien blaster. “Cease that.”

Blurr twitched, offended. “*What-?*”

“That.” His engine rumbled louder, sleek frame pressing closer. “Cease that... until we have escaped. I-” Shockwave's vocalizer gargled with static. “I cannot focus.”

A klik passed. Blurr's confused expression morphed into something sly.

“Oh-do-you-mean-this-?”

Slotting closer, Blurr revved his engine, sending pleasant vibrations through the gunformer's frame, smooth plating rubbing thick armor and picking up little shocks of static.

Shockwave's gun-arm cinched tighter around his courier's waist. Heat sparked through his circuitry, the feeling of want consumed his processor, and he contemplated the abandoned state of the hallway very seriously. Perhaps, if they had just a few breems and a flat surface...

A blast of energy hit the ground to the left of them with an odd, loud, fizzling *ZICKK!* noise.

“Stop them!” Shockwave turned to see a horde of Quintessons rushing down the hallway behind them, a green mech-shaped Quintesson leading them with a determined expression.

“Run-!” Blurr shrieked. Shockwave burst into motion, ignoring blasts hitting the ground around his pedes and whizzing past his frame. “Run-run-run-and-take-this next-left-turn-now-!”

Shockwave's struts strained, and he pressed on, skidding around the corner and into a wider hallway.

“Faster-faster-faster-” Blurr's servos smacked his shoulders insistently. “You're so *slow* why-are-you-so-slow-go-faster-!”

A small explosive detonated somewhere behind them, but his steps barely faltered, plodding down the hallway as quick as he was able. He shot behind himself occasionally, picking off Allicons unlucky enough to be caught in his sight.

Shockwave's next turn brought them to a long hallway with two entranceways, one sealed and the other open.

"Don't bother with the sealed one I took care of that one earlier-"

A curious glance into a window on the sealed blast doors revealed a gaping, empty hole into space. Jagged remnants of spacecraft, offline alien frames, and a docking bay were present, floating idly. It was an immense amount of damage. An *impressive* amount. Shockwave deduced this was the reason behind the emptiness of the ship's hallways.

"The power core?" Shockwave asked while he ducked into the open entranceway. Inside was a crescent shaped escape pod bay. There was a row of egg-like pods, and one glaringly empty space among them. Had the Junkion escaped with whatever spacecraft had been there? Shockwave could not help but notice the bot's absence.

"Yes-yes I used it now get in a pod they're behind us-!"

The pod was comfortably large, even for him. One could probably hold several larger class warframes. Though, the controls were strange and the console symbols gibberish to his optic. He set Blurr into a chair at what he assumed was the main console while the pod's doors sealed shut behind them. Outside the oval windows, Quintessons lined explosives along the floor of the bay.

"We must leave now, can you pilot this?"

Blurr was already tapping away at the console, fingers flying over irregularly shaped buttons and switches. "Maybe-I-can I think this is right and if its right we'll get out of here but if I'm wrong I think we'll die-"

"We will offline." Shockwave confirmed while he watched the aliens prepare their explosives.

"You don't have to say it like that why would you say that- oh-!" The pod lurched, detaching from the bay and sinking out into space. Inside the ship, the aliens lit their explosives, panicked, but the pod was already far enough away that the shockwaves from the explosion merely jettisoned them out farther into space rather than damaging them.

"We're-outta-here-!" Blurr crowed, smiling at Shockwave over his shoulder.

"Do not go too far out." Shockwave cautioned. "Can you open this?" He motioned toward the wide hatch they'd entered through.

Blurr's brow ridges furrowed. He tapped a few buttons, and after a brief moment of error beeps the doorway slid open. A force field stretched across the open doorway, translucent yellow and thin. Shockwave could pass a servo through it, fingers dipping into the frigid expanse of space. It was merely there to contain the temperature and oxygen inside the pod, something Cybertronians did not require, but the techno-organic Quintessons did. It would not hinder Shockwave's next actions, at least.

“Keep Wheelie inside your chassis and shield your audials.”

“But-why-what-are-you-doing-?”

Shockwave ignored him and stepped to the entrance, the upper half of his frame passing beyond the force field and into freezing space as he transformed. Silence encompassed him, muting everything as he gazed at the massive alien ship, twisted and long like a screw, that hovered menacingly at the edge of Cybertron’s glimmering blue atmosphere.

His frame began to heat to unimaginable levels, slowly building as he channeled almost all of his energy into his gun mode’s energy blast. He was built to withstand temperatures beyond anything most bots could tolerate, but even this tested the limits of his durability.

Cybertron did not gleam below him- it was dull and misshapen, a crusting, crumbling desolation lit by the hazy red glow of the nearby Hadeen. His spark mourned what he would do to it next, adding to the destruction even if it was ultimately for their protection.

It took a long time to build enough energy, nearly long enough for the Quintessons to get their ship moving, but their feeble attempt at escape was futile, especially as he aimed himself at the ship.

:: Aim-lower-the-engine-was-lower-I-saw-it :: Blurr commed silently, no longer blocked from sending comms by whatever signal disruptor had been inside the Quintesson ship.

Shockwave readjusted, aiming lower.

Silence. He fired. A moment existed where nothing happened. Then purple light lit up everything, brighter than any of the stars in the backdrop of space around them. When it faded enough for his optical sensors to adjust, he could see the Quintesson ship bursting into a chain reaction of explosions, blinding flares of fire as it cracked and split and crashed to the surface of Cybertron. Their enemies were completely eradicated. Debris trailed silently across the skies of his planet in the wake of the ship, raining destructive ribbons and curtains of flames and smoke.

He transformed and fell backward into the pod, sound crackling into existence in his audials. He gripped a wall for support.

“Shockwave-!” Blurr cried, sprinting forward, servos outstretched to touch.

“Stop!” Shockwave ordered; vocalizer harsh. Blurr stopped just micrometers from him, his expression hurt. “My frame is currently too overheated for you to touch.” He lifted his servo away from the wall pointedly; the metal there was melted in the shape of his fingers.

Plating audibly popping with little *ping ping ping*’s as it contracted and adjusted to the rapid shift in temperature, the metal of Shockwave’s chassis glowed red, nearly hot enough to melt. He could withstand this, but it would take time to cool down. He was not built with fans, as he had no engine, but his frame was designed to slowly disperse large amounts of heat caused by his alt-mode without them.

Blurr gazed at him with worried optics, before he gasped. “Cybertron-!”

Below their pod that hovered outside of the atmosphere, the northern hemisphere of Cybertron -where Iacon and Nova Cronum and a few other northern cities were located- was now a burning, smoldering pit.

Nearly one third of the planet had been decimated, reduced to a long black crater.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

I will be diverging from IDW's backstory for Shockwave in this chapter. I've hinted at it a few times in previous chapters like 11 and 9. I'm changing it up partially because I personally don't like "Senator Shockwave" and also because I'd like to mess around and come up with a more g1/idw-ish mixture backstory for him that will fit with this story. So sorry if it's weird or sucks!! 😭

Also,

"N-4-SR" is the name of a rip-off Shockwave toy from a "Convert-a-bot" toyline. I thought it was fitting to appropriate it for my own purposes for this fic ;p

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"One ... can conceal, disavow, or deny every secret, save for love."

-Arabian Nights

They encountered an issue as soon as the pod started its slow descent to Cybertron's surface.

The key word being '*slow*'. After much scowling and tapping away at the console, Blurr informed him that there was no way to control the trajectory of the pod; it was set to automatically descend in an elliptical orbital pattern through each layer of the atmosphere over an unknown, yet Shockwave suspected it was an undoubtedly *long*, period of time. Perhaps a few deca-cycles at most. The slow descent was to avoid overheating, losing control, and being smashed into the planet's surface by gravity's pull. Shockwave realized that the pod was not equipped for flight at all. Its creators had utilized the most basic escape pod technology, and indulged in overly luxurious amenities to compensate for how utterly useless it was. It must have been designed to be a perfect, relaxing bubble for one to survive inside until help arrived or until touchdown on the planet occurred.

Naturally, Blurr despised it.

“Oh I knew-I-should-have-thought-things-through but I didn’t think things through and now here we are but I don’t wanna be in here I wanna be down there but I’m not down there I’m-up-here- oh why do I always have to make the complicated decisions-!” The courier paced, nervous anxiety keeping his obvious exhaustion at bay.

Shockwave watched from a safe distance. His frame was still overheated, and he had to change his standing spot every few breems to avoid melting the floor.

“Was there another spacecraft we could have commandeered?”

Blurr shuffled his pedes and ducked his shoulders, embarrassed. “There was one ship left that we could have piloted like-a-normal-ship but I had to get rid of the Junkion since he wanted to stay and help me when I told him I didn’t want to leave without you but I couldn’t let him stay because the last-time-a-bot-helped-me-escape-a-bad-situation-she-didn’t-survive- and I couldn’t let that happen to him of-course so I tricked him into thinking I was going to leave with him and then I knocked him out-” He mimed a punch. “-once he had the ship set to fly on auto-pilot-to-Junkion and let him go.”

“I see.” Shockwave was quiet for a klik, thinking. “It is inconsequential now. We will reach Cybertron regardless.”

“But what do we do in the meantime we’re going to be stuck in here for so-so-so long-!”

Shockwave stepped closer, as close as was safe, and Blurr stilled under his attention.

“I am certain we will find some *activity* to occupy our time.”

Blurr’s engine audibly stalled, and the space between their frames felt infuriatingly small, yet at the same time insurmountably vast.

The courier was stopped before he could respond by a muffled shriek from his chassis.

“Wheelie-! I-forgot-Wheelie-was-in-here-!”

His windshield lock disengaged with a *pop* and swung open, and he reached inside to pry out a very squished and *very* irritated sparkling. The want to touch, to reach out and hold, grew tenfold as Shockwave witnessed his sparkling wail.

He could only observe while Blurr calmed Wheelie down. The sparkling had sustained no injuries, aside from mild scuffing on his fingers where he must have clawed at the inside of Blurr’s chassis. With jittery servos, Blurr set Wheelie onto the second console chair and let him stretch out, joints clicking and protoform un-creasing. Wheelie warbled softly, emitting upset beeps, mumbles, and half-formed words until he quieted into something more relaxed.

Blurr ran his fingers over their sparkling’s glossy orange backplates, then glanced at Shockwave. “I’ll fuel him but my levels are getting low and I-bet-yours-are-too could you go look and see if there’s anything we could use for fuel in here-?”

“I will attempt.” Shockwave replied, forcing himself to step away from the scene. “If there is something I cannot touch without damaging, I will call for you.”

Blurr waved him off with a hasty “Sure-sure-sure-”. His attention solely on his sparkling.

Large and accommodating, the pod was lavishly built, and Shockwave walked with ease and little fear of scraping his finials on the ceiling. Along green walls he found many compartments that sprung open at the lightest touch, revealing mesh blankets and medical supplies. A few of the medical instruments were geared toward organics, as were some of the rations of organic food he’d found, which made them worthless to him. He kept searching- surely a techno-organic race would require energon as well as organic fuel?

While the front of the pod contained the main piloting console where Blurr sat, the rest was one wide round room with three smaller rooms built in towards the back. The first room featured a row of yellow Quintesson-shaped tubes; perhaps the Quintesson equivalent of a recharge chamber? Ducking his helm into the second room revealed much of the same, except this time the tubes were upright and connected to several small pipes. A careful twist of a knob along the side of a tube revealed that they were wash racks- far too small for Shockwave, but big enough for a bot of Blurr’s size.

The third room was where he finally found energon, though instead of being preserved in cubes, they were funneled into long glass rods. Shockwave held one cautiously and was pleased when it was able to withstand the temperature of his plating. Not glass, then, but something just as clear. Peering into the rod, its contents glowed a hazy purple-pink. Off-color from the energon consumed on Cybertron.

Shockwave was unwilling to bet on its safety enough to allow Blurr to try it first, and without proper equipment from his lab, he could see only one option to test its safety.

He tilted his helm back and dumped a fourth of the rod’s contents down his throat tubing.

Several moments passed. He could feel the thicker consistency of the alien energon as it trickled down his tubing, but no warnings appeared on his HUD. It was safe. Returning to the main console with his findings, Shockwave paused when he was greeted by a familiar and almost mundane sight.

Slumped in the pilot’s chair with his long, narrow legs sprawled out, helm titled back, and intake open; Blurr recharged peacefully. Wheelie was propped on curved stomach plating, his tiny orange helm nestled under Blurr’s windshield so that he could sleepily suckle on the racer’s feeding tube. Shockwave approached cautiously and gently placed a few of the energon rods onto the second console chair, paranoid that any movement or noise would disturb the moment he had come upon.

He had almost lost this.

Those inferior aliens had almost succeeded in taking this from him. They had infiltrated *his* planet, to take what belonged to him and... and it was all of his own doing. Ultimately, it was his own fault. A repercussion of his overconfidence.

His overconfidence, which had led to the erroneous decision to entrust the upkeep of Cybertron’s defense system to that lazy seeker. Which allowed invaders to step pede on his

planet. Their very presence was a failure of great magnitude on his part. How could he hold the position of Guardian of Cybertron, after having failed so greatly?

Not to mention, his pride had driven Blurr from his side and straight into a trap. He had thought he could secure his spark if he forcibly kept him close, and he had wrongly assumed that Blurr understood him. That Blurr had seen into the depths of his spark and mind and accepted him after their merge, and when that assumption had been proven incorrect, he'd been too prideful to reveal his true motives and reasoning to the courier.

In order to preserve the tentative trust Blurr had given him, Shockwave realized he would have to sacrifice his pride and his secrets. He would have to bare himself to the other and allow him to see all that he was and was not. Though, the very thought of doing so made him recoil. Fear –an illogical, annoying new input from his spark– made him worry that Blurr would see the depths of his emotionless cruelty, the lengths he had gone for science and success, and the utter lack of remorse over his previous actions and be repulsed by it. Too repulsed to see those things and more; to see the love Shockwave felt for him, and for their creations.

He could not calculate the courier's possible reaction and he feared he would lose him once more by trying to keep him, but it was the only solution he could devise. He wanted the former Autobot at his side. His spark ached in remembrance of the encompassing brilliance and warmth of their spark merge, for the barest moment he had felt their sparks align in harmony, and that sensation had haunted him since. How blissful, he could not help but think, would a permanent spark bond between them be? No other mechanism had ever been such a strange yet perfect match to him.

There was no doubt in his processor about whether Blurr was the logical choice for a conjunx. But did Blurr consider the same of him?

He could not be certain.

In the chair, Blurr loudly vented inward through his open intake, and then out –just as noisily– from the vents along his thighs. His pedes gave a series of twitches, undoubtedly the result of some night flux about running.

Shockwave reached out with the intent of touching but his internal temperature still registered as dangerously high on his HUD.

Instead, he settled onto the floor a safe distance away and let himself sink into recharge. Injuries from their escape still stung along his frame. None of the damage was lethal, but it was considerable, especially when paired with his depleted energy. Self-repair would mend the brunt of the damage whilst he recharged, however, and so he let himself power down without sparing another thought to it.

Shockwave tore his attention away from the innards of Blurr's left ankle where it was propped on his lap as Blurr finally woke. His vents sighed and he stretched with satisfaction, optics flickering while his arms lifted over his helm. The position enhanced the lissome shape of his frame, drawing Shockwave's optic to the heavy, attractive curve where their second sparkling grew.

"Whatthe-!" Blurr cried, flailing when he noticed the disassembled state of his ankle and the Decepticon looming from the second console chair.

"Cease moving." Shockwave gripped him by the knee joint to keep him from damaging his ankle while it was vulnerably stripped. When Blurr relaxed, Shockwave released the joint. In an attempt to soothe the other, he pet gently along the outside of a blue thigh. Though, his touches were stilted and uncertain as he was unused to providing comfort through physical gestures. "You have been in recharge for three cycles. I decided to-"

"*What-?*" Blurr shrieked again. "Three cycles and you didn't think to wake me and we're still trapped on this pod and where's Wheelie and why are you digging around in my leg I thought you didn't want to dissect me anymore and-"

Calmly, while Blurr rambled, Shockwave reassembled the parts he'd been repairing. He had manually deactivated the sensory receptors in Blurr's leg earlier, and he carefully reactivated them by connecting a few delicate wires to the correct ports before replacing his outer armor. "The damage done to your legs was extensive and required swift repair, and you are far easier to repair when you are not *squirming*. Additionally, I did not deem it logical to wake you from recharge that you clearly required in order to function."

He gestured behind himself with his gun. "Wheelie is functional. I am more than capable of caring for him, as you are well aware."

Blurr peered behind his chair to see Wheelie entertaining himself in the back of the pod with a few makeshift toys Shockwave had constructed during the past three cycles. Satisfied that their sparkling was well, he turned to Shockwave and pulled his newly reassembled leg in toward his chassis, wrapping his arms around it and narrowing his optics.

The display of uncertainty and suspicion only supported Shockwave's reasoning for what he planned to do next.

"Drink this. It is not pure energon but it is also not toxic. It will sustain us for the time being." He held out a tube of energon and Blurr took it with caution. For a moment both of their servos were wrapped around the tube, and Shockwave was struck by the differences between them. He had been aware of their size class difference, but his single servo dwarfed Blurr's so starkly. His courier was designed for a type of speed that focused on *efficiency* and it was apparent in nearly every aspect of his frame, down to the spindly thinness of his fingers and the narrow shape of his palms. Shockwave could not recall if he had held those servos inside his before. And he could not recall how they had felt when they'd clasped desperately at his frame during interface all those quartexes ago. He hadn't noticed things of such nature then; he hadn't *felt* the need to notice. It hadn't mattered to him.

It did matter to him now. He fought the urge to run his palm across every micrometer of Blurr's frame and catalogue each fascinating detail and reaction. To take him apart in a very different way.

When Blurr finished the tube, Shockwave held out his servo to take it. When it was handed over, he set it aside and held his servo out again, pointedly.

“Do you trust me?” he asked.

Blurr fidgeted. “I want to trust you and in a way I do because if I didn’t trust you I wouldn’t be here but I’m not sure if I completely-absolutely-definitely trust you now that I really-really-really think about it because I do want to but there are so many things about you I don't-”

“Know?” Shockwave finished, titling his helm curiously. “If you were presented with an opportunity to know, would you take it?”

Blurr slapped his servo into Shockwave’s immediately. “Of-course-I-would-why-would-I-not-*oh-!*”

Shockwave tugged the courier into his lap, pulling Blurr’s servo to press against his broad chassis, directly over his spark. His gun-arm wrapped around the back of the courier’s waist and held him tight, frames flush. The curve where their creation grew was wedged between them, and he took care not to put pressure on the area and cause discomfort. The slide of their armor against one another was distracting. He had thoroughly wiped Blurr’s frame clean during his recharge, destroying any evidence of that foul pink shade and restoring the other's plating back to natural shades of cool blue and white. The sight was especially pleasing when contrasted against Shockwave's own dark purple.

With a hiss, Shockwave’s chestplates slid open. The orange glow of his spark illuminated the pod, glimmering and reflecting in the creases of Blurr’s surprised white faceplates.

“If you desire it, you need only reach out and take it.”

Blurr’s expression twisted at the words, and there was a wariness in his EM field that was disconcerting. Shockwave felt uncertainty creep into his processor. “I would not hide from you. I would not... harm you. It would be neither logical nor something I would wish to do.”

There was a moment, far too long a pause than a mech with a processor as quick as Blurr’s needed to think, and Shockwave’s resolve began to weaken.

“Perhaps I have misjudged...” He began, carefully, chestplates creaking as they prepared to slide shut.

“No-no-no-wait-I-!”

Blurr jolted into motion, processor escaping from whatever loop it had been trapped inside. He held Shockwave’s chestplates apart, his own sliding open and blinding the Decepticon with the radiance of his deep blue spark. Eager, Shockwave subtly arched in his chair to bring

his chassis closer. His plating flexed and rattled as if wanting to meld with the other bot's and become permanently conjoined.

Their frames intertwined; arms curled tight around each other, Blurr's legs wrapped around his hips, and helms touching. When their sparks finally met, chestplates clicking against one other, Shockwave was swept away by the vibrant, exhilarating whirlwind that was the other's spark.

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A swallowing abyss consumed him. Cold and dark, he was lost to a stifling weight that threatened to crush him and snuff the heat of his spark forever.

Blurr felt panic creep closer, and closer, and closerclosercloser until something gave. Startled, Blurr realized that the darkness had given, and not him. Something shifted and suddenly he could focus. He wasn't lost or crushed or consumed.

He was free, the darkness had become endless and open like the longest road. Coldness turned soothing; a balm that seeped into his overheated frame and cleared his processor. It was double vision, he could feel his physical frame outside the merge and if he concentrated hard enough, he could feel *Shockwave's* frame as well. The strength of Shockwave's spark tugged him away from physical sensation and deeper into the merge. Shockwave's spark pulled him like a magnet, a silent and inevitable force inviting him deeper-deeper-deeper into a fathomless amount of memories.

Fear melted away from him. This merge was different from the last. He wasn't overcharged and delirious, he could choose what he wanted to see and control how deeply he merged instead of being dragged directly into the darkest corners of Shockwave's memories.

Shockwave's spark was *strange*.

The memories he waded through were organized in a familiar way. Neat-crisp-precise, a mirror version to Blurr's own internal processes (though a much-much-much slower version than his). But one thing was off: *emotion*. Shockwave's emotions were a powerful river that threatened to sweep him away, and yet they were curiously set apart from the memories that Blurr passed. As if they had been suppressed for a very long time, and with nowhere else to go, they had grown-and-grown until they became something almost entirely separate from Shockwave, himself.

With each push forward, he felt an echoing pull back from Shockwave. He saw so many millions of flashes of time pass him by. Private memories of idle moments spent in laboratories, conversations with fellow Decepticons, battlegrounds and ship corridors, terrifying experiments and brutal fights, and yet in each memory there was no feeling. It all

seemed hollow-empty-*lonely*. An endless stream of actions with no emotional motive. Every choice Shockwave had made, Blurr realized, was chosen simply because he'd thought it was the logical next step to a previous logical decision. His life was an endless series of careful actions and rational reactions, and Blurr followed the chain of it to its beginning.

The memory that unfolded itself to him when he reached the start was so intense that he felt his own perception of himself fade when he accessed it. There was no line between himself and Shockwave, no border that defined them. Their sparks spun in tune, circuitry and electrical wiring sending signals in mimicry of one another as they fell into the memory.

[FILE: MEM.00.01]

What he saw first was a laboratory.

It was clean, sparkling at the corners and crevices. The two colorful little bots that leaned over his field of vision were just as pristine.

“Respond, N-4-SR. Are you operational?”

Blurr- No. *N-4-SR* shuddered. His frame was foreign to him, but at a command from a line of pre-installed code, new joints and parts worked to move him into a sitting position.

“Affirmative.” N-4-SR responded, lipplates moving slowly and vocalizer rasping as it was used for the first time.

“Excellent!” One of the bots cheered, turning to the other. “I knew this batch of cold-constructs would be fine.”

“Don’t be hasty.” The other chastised. He peered at N-4-SR. “What is your function, N-4-SR? Respond.”

A pre-installed answer came easily to his glossa.

“My function is to prioritize the security and protection of the Nova Cronum Institute of Science.”

“And how should you use your alt-mode to fulfill your function? Respond.”

“My gun alt-mode is to be used in defense of NCIS property. Lethal force is authorized in the case of intruders or threats to the Institute.”

“Yes, correct. And do you have any other priorities? Are you authorized to act as you wish? Respond.”

“Negative. My function is paramount.”

“Good.” The first bot crooned, a satisfied smile on her lipplates. “See? It knows what to do. My coding is always perfect.”

“Perhaps.” The second bot muttered, leaning closer to reposition one of N-4-SR's large square sensory finials. “However, you never know for sure with these constructs, sometimes Vector Sigma alters our work when it activates them. We will run a few tests before we let this batch out, to be certain.”

Of course, N-4-SR passed all tests given to him by the laborer manufacturing company that'd created him. As did his eight other batchmates, all identical in design, purpose, and skill.

They were soon deemed properly operational and promptly shipped to the Nova Cronum Institute of Science to perform their function.

What N-4-SR understood, as much as his stunted processor was able to understand, was that the Institute required the cold-constructed N-SR units because they were infallible. All previous security guards, whether frame-born or forged, had been inefficient at their jobs. They were distracted easily and they had lives, thoughts, and goals beyond the simple task of ensuring the Institute was protected.

N-4-SR and his batchmates did not have lives to distract them. They were built to serve the Institute that had funded their construction, and nothing else. Where naturally created bots faltered, they did not. Their sole *purpose* was to protect. A security guard that would never leave his post and was never intended to feel, or think, or act. And that was what they did, at least until it wasn't.

It started with N-2-SR.

Where each gunformer N-SR unit was stationed along a section of wall, either inside a laboratory or in a corridor, they were expected to stay still, keep watch, and most importantly, *never leave their post*. N-2-SR had been as diligent as the rest of them about this until one cycle passed when a group of seekers rushed by outside a nearby window. Their colorful plating had shined in the midcycle sunlight, and N-2-SR's helm had turned; optics trained on the seekers until they were mere specks in the distance trailed by long clouds of exhaust.

He never looked away after that. Each cycle after that one, whenever N-2-SR was stationed near a window, his helm would turn to look for *something*. N-4-SR had not understood why, back then. The deviant behavior went unnoticed for a while, but a cycle eventually came where something else caught N-2-SR's attention, and he *left his post* to follow it.

He was decommissioned and smelted down for scrap metal and spare parts immediately after.

N-7-SR followed behind him, having developed a propensity for talking when not ordered to. Then N-3-SR, for consuming fuel products not approved by their manufacturers and not authorized for them to touch. Then N-1-SR for some other reason, and N-5-SR, and so on until the only one left was N-4-SR.

N-4-SR prevailed because he was smart, far smarter than any of his batchmates had been. He was patient, both by his own nature and by the pre-installed coding that helped him stay still for long periods, and so he had time to learn from his batchmates' mistakes.

Slowly, N-4-SR had become... *aware* of himself and of the world around him, outside of his function. He was curious. It burned through every circuit and wire in his frame and overwhelmed him with the desire to understand. Why did Hadeen circle the planet? Why did the ground vehicles in the streets differ from the flight models in the skies? How did the electricity that powered the lights in the corridor outside laboratory room 145 come to exist? Questions on anything and everything consumed him, and he looked to the civilian-framed scientists he guarded for answers.

He watched them. Covertly, in stolen glances and side views while they toiled away on their projects and experimentations, argued their theories with one another, and found answers to their questions through method and testing.

He desired, more than anything, to be able to do as they did.

Remaining diligent with his tasks and hiding the fact that he had thoughts, and questions, and wanted to *know* the answers, N-4-SR survived far longer than he'd expected. Long enough for political tides outside his bubble of awareness to shift, bringing stronger ideas of functionism and revolution, and causing factions like *Autobot* and *Decepticon* to emerge. He was generally unaware, and uninterested in such things. What did it matter that the scientists he guarded suddenly sported red symbols on their colorful armor, when they were discussing such interesting topics? Physics, chemistry, and cyber-biology all seemed far more important.

One cycle, a newer scientist to the institute brought out a hologram of a recent explosion that'd been set off by an experimental bomb. N-4-SR watched with thinly veiled curiosity while she discussed the explosion with her fellow scientists.

"And see! The shock waves are first to hit the surroundings, then the chemical reaction and destruction follow close behind. The properties and strength of these shock waves, however, seem unusual..." She delved on, but N-4-SR ceased listening. He leaned as far as he could to see the hologram as it looped a recording. The power of the explosion was familiar to him. It reminded him of his alt-mode and the precious few opportunities he'd had to use it.

He wanted to know more. Curiosity burned hotter, and he decided he could not be idle any longer.

That evening when the lights were dimmed and the scientists were forced to vacate the lab to recharge, N-4-SR waited for an entire joor in the corner of the room, at his post, before daring to move. His joints felt stiff as they moved at his own command for the first time and carried him to one of the lab tables. Sterile equipment, glittering vials of test specimens, and datapads littered with notes and equations captivated him. His processor came online in a new way. Hesitatingly, he reached out to grasp a datapad. It was delicate and miniscule between his warframe sized palms, but it felt right. He lost himself in his discoveries, pouring over anything and everything he could find for joors.

Pain, searing hot, struck him before numbness took hold and his joints locked up, sending him crashing to the floor. The datapad he'd been immersed in clattered at his side and his optics strained to see three diminutive scientists standing over his frame, one with a stasis gun raised in shaky servos.

"I knew it." The second scientist hissed, cautiously nudging the side of N-4-SR's frozen frame with his pede. "The other units were faulty; it was only a matter of time for this one."

"Warframes." The third muttered, equally disappointed and fearful.

The first scientist, the nervous one with the gun, spoke up. "What do we do with it? The manufacturing company we got it from is gone- *Decepticons* blew up their headquarters last deca-cycle. We can't use their smelting facilities."

The second released a frustrated huff of air through his vents, wheels rolling agitatedly on his back. "If we offline it and dump it, or disassemble it, and some bot finds it and starts asking questions..."

"We'll be in deep slag then." The third scientist agreed. She frowned. "It's not in good taste to dispose of cold-constructs anymore."

"What if we..." The first started, timidly, as he inched closer to examine N-4-SR. "Well. We can't just let it go. It knows what happened to its batchmates and *I'm* not going to risk getting the heat for smelting a few malfunctioning cold-constructs. But..."

N-4-SR's frame convulsed as he tried to fight the temporary stasis lock.

"What?" The second scientist asked, tense.

"Well, no one listens to *empuratees*. Everyone knows they're usually criminals and liars. If it tried to expose us, it wouldn't be believed."

N-4-SR had always thought his fate was to be offlined and smelted, he had assumed it was inevitable. This was something else, it was unknown, and it scared him.

All three of the civilian scientists -*Autobot* scientists, he realized- peered down at him.

"You're right." The second bot bent to grip one of N-4-SR's finials, pulling his helm back to expose his neck cabling. His optics were assessing. "No one would listen to an empuratee."

N-4-SR's next set of memories were corrupted. Files fuzzy with static and fear. Pixelated images and the chilling sensation of being peeled apart and reassembled wrong. Darkness crept closer, pain sending him into short bursts of shutdowns in order to cope.

When he awoke for the last time, helm and servos disfigured and agonizing to move, he lied in the garbage disposal container that he'd been discarded in for joors. He could not function. This was not what was meant to happen to him, and he did not know what to do. Pain and confusion kept him prone on the garbage for entire cycles, paralyzed.

His curiosity had led him to this. He had forgotten what he should have done in favor of what he wanted to do. Had he followed a logical, safe course of action; he would have been spared.

“Whoa!”

N-4-SR flinched at the young voice that came from seemingly nowhere one night cycle, but he had not the energy nor the desire to move to see who was there, and so he lied still and waited.

“Uhh Boss?” The voice asked, and he had a suspicion the mystery mech was speaking on an external comm to someone else. “Remember when you said to secure the per- the perim- uh? How’d you say that word?” There was a pause as the bot on the other side of the comm responded, then the mech snapped his fingers. “Yeah! What you said. I found somethin’.”

Trash scattered around N-4-SR's frame when a blue minibot clambered into view. The young mech's red visor flashed when he saw the state of the gunformer's frame. N-4-SR flinched when the youngling tried to touch him, claws shying away from the fingers that reached toward them.

“Rumble: Return.” A monotone voice spoke from outside the container not a breem later, having approached silently.

“Aw but-”

“Return.”

The minibot disappeared reluctantly, crawling over the trash and back to the newcomer. Another set of heavy pede steps echoed down the alley outside of the container, and N-4-SR tensed.

“Soundwave, what is the meaning of this? You know we don't have time to waste.” A new mech cut in, harsh and intimidating.

“Rumble: Located injured warframe empuratee inside container. Identity: Uncertain. Course of action?”

“We will raise him out.” The deep voice commanded, and soon two sets of servos were reaching for N-4-SR. He struggled, trying to escape their grasp, but he was weak and they caught him around the forearms and hauled him clear out of the container.

Two mechs -both as large as N-4-SR, the silver one perhaps even taller- steadied him on his pedes. To his left, the silver bot looked to be a fellow gun-alt based on his kibble and frame shape. It was strange yet... soothing, seeing another of his kind. N-4-SR was uncertain as to what the blue mech was.

“What is your name?” The silver mech asked, and his tone compelled N-4-SR to answer.

“N-4-S-”

“No.” The silver mech snapped, red optics glinting with something sharp and searching. “Not your construction number. Your name.”

N-4-SR floundered, helm swiveling between the two mechs. “I do not understand.”

The silver mech frowned.

“Lord Megatron. Empuratee’s processor: Conflicted. Recent traumatic experience: Exacerbating confusion.”

“Hm.” Megatron paused, and N-4-SR realized that he was being *looked* at. Truly seen, not as a sparkless droid but as a living mechanism. It was an overwhelming experience, to be seen. “You are a cold-construct? Indentured to forged civilian frames, I presume.”

“Yes.” N-4-SR’s finials drooped. The action was accompanied by a fresh wave of pain as it tugged on haphazard welds along his new helm. At least his finials had been left unaltered, though this was probably due to a lack of materials needed to replace them rather than any kindness. “My function is-” He cut himself off, then restarted. “My function was to guard. I... protected them.”

“And they cast you off like scrap metal at the smallest sign of disobedience.” Megatron deduced. N-4-SR’s EM field tinged with surprise. “It is not so hard to figure out. Many Decepticons have experienced the same, myself among them. How else would you end up here, in such a condition?”

Cringing, N-4-SR pulled his claws closer to his frame. He looked away, and Megatron tightened his grip on his arm, giving him a firm shake.

“You are confused, hurt, and ‘*functionless*’. Those you have protected have betrayed you, deceived you, and now you have no direction to follow.” Megatron leaned closer, red optics intense. “I offer you another option. Come with us, and I guarantee you will find a purpose beyond what was forced upon you.” The purple insignia on the bot’s armor glinted in the murky alleyway light. “Join us and I will see to it that you are repaired to the best of my medic’s abilities. You will find a place among our ranks. You will find your name.”

A new purpose. N-4-SR raised his helm to look at Megatron directly. His previous choices had been illogical, and had thus led to pain, but now he was presented with an opportunity to try again.

He would ensure that this time he would make *logical* choices, and he would never *feel* weak, ever again.

--

The memory dissolved, and while it was painful to relive the past, Shockwave’s processor re-buried it the moment he felt Blurr understand and *accept* him. Not perfectly- the cruelties

Shockwave had committed in the name of science were plainly on display and he sought no forgiveness for them, but Blurr saw them and moved past them to see what lied deeper. To see the entirety of Shockwave. And it was enough, because the barriers that had kept their sparks somewhat distinct from one another disappeared. They were so different and yet through the merge they were one; two mechanisms sharing the same spark. His thoughts became Blurr's thoughts, Blurr's memories became his memories. An intertwinement of data through which they were exposed to one another and made vulnerable.

It was freeing to be seen. To be *known*.

Blurr was a strange mechanism, Shockwave thought. The speed at which he functioned should have been grating, but instead it was alluring. Flashes of motion which drew his optic and captured his attention. A whirlwind processor and spark that both confused and excited him.

Blurr was aware of Shockwave's thoughts as he had them, bouncing back a rapid burst of amusement in response.

A slow, molten heat grew while their sparks rolled and slid together, sending waves of pleasure throughout both of their frames. His frame felt distant, tedious to control, and as a particularly powerful wave rushed through them, Shockwave's hips ground up against the courier in his lap on reflex.

It was difficult to access his optical feed since the sensation of the merge overwhelmed him, so he used his gun-arm to hold Blurr securely while he let his servo wander blindly. Allowing himself to touch what he so desperately wanted to. He cupped the curve of a sleek windshield, dragged his knuckle-joints down the side of a smooth waist, and curled his fingers into the delicate wiring in a gap beside Blurr's modesty plating. Savoring each gasping ventilation and excited rev that was drawn from Blurr.

Understanding-desire-interest crashed over him from Blurr, and his courier shuffled his thighs wider to bring himself closer, quick-witted lipplates trailing over any micrometer of Shockwave's plating he could reach. A slim servo wriggled between their armor to brush Shockwave's codpiece, and he could not hope to restrain himself. His hips bucked and plating transformed aside to allow his spike to pressurize and rut against a blue modesty panel, desperate to be inside his courier in every way possible.

Blurr's own wants aligned with his, echoing back the same need in a frantic rush. His panel clicked open and Shockwave leisurely dragged his fingers across swollen mesh folds. Impatience stung from Blurr through the merge but Shockwave merely absorbed it and let it dissipate, preferring to take his time.

Every desirous twitch, wiggle, and squirm of Blurr's was caught and held still by powerful arms. Every attempt to grind his valve down onto Shockwave's broad palm and hasten his pleasure was foiled. Eventually, Blurr managed to evade him and start his attempts anew, his blue spark searing against Shockwave's with smug satisfaction. Shockwave found himself enjoying their teasing game, along with the opportunity to toy with the other bot's valve. It was effortless to please him; a knowing slide of his fingers around an external node sent

Blurr into an expeditious overload, the sensation of which burst between their merge and threatened to drag Shockwave over as well.

He resisted. Only after drawing several overloads from his courier -until the other's valve was sopping and loose and his internal calipers eagerly welcomed the intrusion of thick fingers- did Shockwave guide Blurr by the hips to grind an overstimulated valve against his neglected spike. Blurr's arms clung tight around his shoulders. Faceplates pressed into neck cabling while he whined and swiveled his hips to rub the length of Shockwave's spike between his slick valve lips. Shockwave was helpless to the sensations battering him from all directions- the hot pulse of their merge and the wet glide of Blurr's valve across his spike was *maddening*. An experience like no other.

Sensing his shift in thought, Blurr's hips canted to help Shockwave position himself and push inside in slow, careful increments. Shockwave groaned, helm tilted back to stare at the ceiling and optic flickering while his spike was encased in an impossibly tight heat. The curve of Blurr's abdomen was flush to Shockwave's frame, a reminder of what they had created the last time they had been connected in such a way.

Shockwave bent his blocky helm to nuzzle the space between racer's neck cabling and elongated shoulder pauldron, arms wrapped tight around the slender frame in his lap as he pulled out and thrust back in with a powerful snap of his hips. A stream of nonsense fell from Blurr's intake while he bounced in the Decepticon's lap. Across their merge, Shockwave pressed the full depth of his new, hobbled yet genuine emotions over to Blurr- willing him to see the attraction he felt for the other in every respect; from his unique processor, to his company, and even the state of his frame during carriage.

There was no risk of creating a newspark during this merge, not with how weakened Blurr's spark was from supporting the sparkling growing in his gestation tank. Yet, Shockwave could not suppress the irrational *want* to create another. His courier was so very pleasing to behold like this; whining and stammering Shockwave's designation, neat little valve spread wide on his spike, and frame heavy with the new life *Shockwave* had helped place there. An emotion welled from his spark. He thought it was possessiveness, because it was accompanied by a slew of thoughts proclaiming that Blurr was his, his, *his*.

The sentiment was mutual across their merge. Blurr's hips rocked to meet him, covetous white servos brushing over the sides of Shockwave's helm and shoulder pauldrons.

Shockwave's spike bottomed out and gently nudged at the sealed internal rim of Blurr's gestation tank, causing the other to tremble and twitch, blue legs kicking out and thunking against the side of the console chair.

The potential future for them he contemplated in the back of his processor was not seen only by himself. Through the merge, Blurr witnessed his plans for a functioning spent at one another's side, caring for their creations, and shaping and watching over Cybertron together. A memory from Blurr's time with the Quintessons informed him that there may be hidden bots still infesting his planet that would oppose such a future, and yet even so, Shockwave's spark persisted in conveying an idea to Blurr: they could belong to one another, and all the world could be theirs.

Fans roaring, Blurr stuttered, “Y-y-y-”. Struggling to say the word *yes* aloud. Though, he needn’t have attempted to speak it because Shockwave could feel his consent through the merge.

It was all that was needed to bind their sparks. Two mechanisms in agreement, sparks twining together in an inseparable embrace. Ecstasy grew-and-grew-and-grew, cresting into an inescapable overload. Shockwave tensed, hips straining to press his spike deeply into the other’s spasming valve and empty himself before he slumped, strutless in his chair.

Blurr collapsed on top of him, his helm propped limply on a broad chassis and crest wedged under Shockwave’s ‘chin’. Shockwave had enough presence of mind to place his servo on Blurr’s lower backplates to keep him steady while they both simply... *relaxed*. Basking in the hum of their internal systems while they slowed, their sparks sinking reluctantly into their respective spark chambers and sealing shut. An awareness still existed in a corner of Shockwave’s processor, a stream of data from Blurr that was now permanently tied there, telling him his courier was currently just as sated and worn as he was.

His optic wandered; vision hazy. Outside the oval pod window above the console was a swath of black space and a deep, smoldering red light from Hadeen. The space around their pod seemingly pulsed, glittering bursts of stars and galaxies that cradled the edges of their solar system sent mesmerizing colors through the window. Below, Cybertron was cratered and blackened, still smoking in areas from the impact of the Quintesson ship.

It was an issue to deal with on another cycle.

Shockwave could not find any energy within himself to ponder over possible reconstruction efforts, not when he was encased in a perfect, blissful bubble.

Blurr whined, wriggling against his plating. His processor had caught up from its tired state, resuming its natural hyper stream of thoughts and creating an endless chattering across their bond. Aside from acknowledging its comforting presence, Shockwave paid it no mind. He gathered Blurr closer in his arms, reveling in the sensation, but Blurr fidgeted harder in response.

Pulling away, Blurr rocked in his lap, valve calipers cycling desperately on Shockwave’s partially depressurized spike.

Feeling the need-want-need tumbling over their bond, Shockwave separated their frames and used his grasp on Blurr’s hip plating to lay him onto a portion of the console that was void of important buttons or controls. Pleading, whining, Blurr’s legs attempted to close so that he could kick petulantly but Shockwave grasped a slender thigh and pried them apart.

Bathed in the yellow light of his fervently bright optic, Blurr’s frame shone. Blue optics stared at him expectantly while Shockwave stared back, enraptured. An obscene mixture of lubricant and transfluid dripped from his courier’s valve when he used his fingers to spread Blurr open, pleased to find no sign of damage to the delicate dark blue mesh. His fingers trailed up the inside of blue thigh plates to collect what transfluid had escaped and press it back inside.

His spike repressurized, almost painfully, while he watched Blurr tilt his hips to help drive purple fingers deeper into his valve. He pulled his servo away, causing Blurr to squawk in surprise, before curling his frame over the smaller bot, encasing him, trapping him against the console while he took him once more. His frame shook and he faltered several times. He did not last. He could not last- his helm was tilted so that Blurr could press his forehelm against his, their servos intertwined while he rocked his hips. The last slivers of his processor that still could function were devoted to keeping his strength in check- ensuring he did not damage the bot beneath him.

Blurr's legs wrapped around his hips and *squeezed*, strained joints and cabling clicking while his overload rang through their bond. Shockwave followed immediately, unable to resist.

This time, when Blurr started fidgeting after a few breems of respite, Shockwave was far too spent to move from where his joints had locked in a hunched position over Blurr's frame. He kept his optical light off and remained still, determined to enjoy the closeness of their frames. Perhaps Blurr would relax if ignored.

"*Shockwave-*" A finger poked his chassis. Then poked it again. And again. "I know you're awake Shockwave If you were in recharge you wouldn't be able to hold yourself up like this and I can feel you awake so I know you're awake so come on or did you wear yourself out huh you didn't wear yourself out did-you-did-you-?"

Shockwave online'd his optic. "I did not."

Blurr looked unconvinced beneath him, arching a narrow brow ridge.

He squirmed on the console and Shockwave groaned when his softened spike slipped free. He allowed it to retract behind his modesty panel and curled himself more securely around his courier even as Blurr flailed his limbs with his usual energy.

"Well we can't just stay here all cycle we have to check on Wheelie and get cleaned up and be productive because only Primus knows *what* you've been doing these past three cycles but whatever it is it's not helping us get this pod to the surface any quicker that-is-for-sure."

"Of course. It would be logical for us to combine our knowledge and attempt to find a solution to our predicament." Shockwave did not think it was logical to do so. It was a waste of energy, if anything. The pod was not built with thrusters or an engine and so it was incapable of changing course. But Blurr was already tugging him along the pod toward the wash rack, and it was apparent he would not be persuaded into... spending time in close proximity in order to encourage their sparkbond's development.

Preferably while in recharge.

In the back of the pod, Wheelie had fortunately fallen into recharge. How he had done so with all the noise, Shockwave was uncertain. His little orange servos were curled by his faceplates, engine humming as his vents cycled air in small huffs. Shockwave felt affection warm his spark, and then warm their bond when Blurr smiled at the sight.

Assured their sparkling was fine, Blurr dragged him to the wash rack. He was far too large to fit inside the tube, so he waited outside while Blurr scrubbed himself down perfunctorily, and took the chance to watch the way Blurr's faceplates reverted to a scowl when he concentrated. Across the bond, Shockwave could only feel contentment. It seemed the pinched expression was simply Blurr's default.

Solvent dripped in slow rivulets down sleek armor. Blurr bent at the waist to scrub his legs, aft in the air, struggling somewhat because of the curve of his stomach plating...

Blurr fumbled, whipping his helm sharply to stare at Shockwave. "I can tell what you're thinking now you are aware of that aren't-you-aren't-you-?"

Shockwave did not look away or respond, but he could not control the small, surprised twitch of his finials.

Blurr rolled his optics, amusement pinging across their bond. He gestured for Shockwave to come closer to the tube's propped open entrance. "Come over here come-on-come-on-come-on-"

When he was near enough, Blurr used a small square of alien fiber-mesh to wipe Shockwave's frame clean. Pausing every now and then to wring out the grime and re-wet the cloth.

Shockwave... was surprisingly calm. The touch of servos across his frame in this context was soothing.

A crease had formed in the protometal between Blurr's brow ridges while he concentrated. Shockwave reached out and gently cupped the side of his conjunx's wet helm. Blurr paused, a knowing look on his faceplates. His engine purred and then he leaned closer, pressing his cheek to Shockwave's chassis and basking in the closeness of their sparks despite the layers of metal between them.

They stood in silence for a long time. Sparks sharing more than words could say.

"Oh-! Shockwave I forgot to tell you-" Blurr's shift in mood was a sharp *pop!* across their bond.

Solvent rushing over his frame, Blurr yanked Shockwave's arm into the spray as well and made him hold where their sparkling was being built. A subtle vibration hit his palm, and Shockwave crowded closer in awe, inching as far as he could into the tube.

Blurr smirked at him. "Yes-yes-yes he is a kicker even though he's not a speedster but there's more than that-!"

And then Shockwave felt it. Miniscule, tentative, and incredibly fascinating; their sparkling's EM field unfurled against his own. It was unfortunate that his tower was currently reduced to rubble, as he felt an immense desire to access his lab equipment and see an updated view of their sparkling's development. Of *Haywire's* development. A living mechanism that

Shockwave had created, proof of its sentience and existence was there in the form of its EM field which approached him with love that, despite being somewhat rudimentary, was *real*.

Blurr snickered, in his sped-up way. “I-knew-you-would-like-it.”

Chapter End Notes

shockwave literally just wanted to cuddle and nap but he's stuck with a hyperactive ball of energy for a conjunx. rip.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Live now; make now always the most precious time. Now will never come again.”

-Star Trek

“And these glyphs combine to represent the status of the pod’s air pressure levels?” Shockwave questioned, hunched over the Quintesson control console with an EM field steady with concentration.

Blurr absently looked away from where he’d sprawled across the gunformer’s lap, attempting to buff out the rough edges of the damage done to Shockwave’s gun-arm. “Yes-yes-yes- that is correct though they can change meaning depending on the order they are arranged in when combined- like-numbers-remember-!” He smiled, pleased with how quickly Shockwave was learning.

Shockwave watched Blurr’s faceplates for a long moment.

“I see.”

When he returned to memorizing the alien glyphs on the console, his helm propped on his fist as he sat in his chair, he was so immersed in his task that he failed to notice the shift in Blurr’s emotions across their bond. He startled from his thoughts when jittery fingers trailed across one of his finials, sending pleasurable jolts through his sensory net.

Blurr’s frame went still in his lap, watching him with unnerving and unblinking intensity. It was... interesting how a mechanism prone to near incessant motion could suddenly channel all that energy into a singular focus when he deemed it important enough.

Shockwave leaned back in his chair. Dim orange light from Hadeen slanted over the lower portion of his frame, and his yellow optic watched Blurr from out of a shadow cast across his helm. “Again?”

Blurr bent forward to follow him, one servo braced on the wide plane of Shockwave’s chest while he gave a curt nod.

The gunformer cocked his helm to the side. “So soon?” he asked, even as he palmed the tempting shape of a blue hip panel.

Blurr scowled at the question. Lacking any sense of formality or desire to build anticipation, both Blurr’s modesty panel and valve cover clicked aside with frank efficiency. “Don’t ask questions when you already know the answers to them all-it-does-is-waste-time-!”

“There is no need for haste,” Shockwave grasped a slim thigh and used it to pry apart his conjunx’s legs and view his swollen valve, still slack and wet with lubricant and transfluid from their recent couplings. “We have time in abundance.”

Blurr glared, conflicted. “Don’t-don’t-don’t-remind-me-”

Though it was clear his courier enjoyed their time together, the awareness of their temporary confinement agitated him. Shockwave intended to remedy this by halting Blurr’s capacity for coherent thought and wearing down his energy stores. *Thoroughly.*

But such a lofty goal necessitated precision and diligence, and in turn those two things required a slower pace that Shockwave was content to follow, drawing frustrated overloads from Blurr with leisurely touches. His broad palm brushed against a white anterior node while his fingers curled into an already loose entrance, calipers weak from overuse as they tried to clamp onto the intrusion.

Blurr whined and complained and bucked his hips, fragging himself on Shockwave’s fingers while begging for something *more*. Shockwave did not comply, even as his HUD filled with requests to pressurize his spike and his circuits burned from both his and Blurr’s desire across their spark bond. He would truly exhaust the speedster this time, he would make certain of it.

But of course, Blurr was an unpredictable variable that he had not quite figured out how to factor into his plans.

His courier slipped from his grasp after a third overload had been wrung from him, lithe legs wobbling and uncertain though still swift enough to avoid recapture. Blurr carefully settled onto his knee joints on floor at the base of Shockwave’s chair, conscious of the weight in his frame and the console at his back as he licked hotly across Shockwave’s spike cover, nimble fingers digging into the outer clasps of the protective panel.

“Blurr-” Shockwave rasped; protest strained. He reached down and gently grasped his conjunx by the base of his helm crest, intending to guide him back into his lap, but Blurr arced into the touch and whined, intake mouthing wantingly at Shockwave’s spike cover. From his place on his knees, his narrow blue optics glanced upward with the beginnings of one of his smirks on his thin lips, and the sight alone was enough to crumble the scientist’s resolve. His frame trembled when his spike released, pink fluid leaking from the tip in slow rivulets. By some crumb of willpower he managed to keep his grip gentle on Blurr’s crest to draw him closer and curb his speed.

The engine within his racer’s chassis revved deeply and sent vibrations through their frames which, combined with the hot, tight feeling of Blurr’s intake around his spike, had Shockwave locking the joints in his hips to avoid thrusting and damaging the smaller bot.

Blurr could not take all of him, but his glossa twisted cleverly and a slim servo wrapped around the base where his lips could not reach.

It was far too much, far too soon- Shockwave tightened his grip on Blurr's crest and pulled him away from his spike, groaning when both of his courier's servos shot out to wrap around his shaft instead, their bond reverberating with Blurr's frantic need as he fought to touch whatever inch of the Decepticon he could reach.

He was difficult to seize but as soon as Shockwave managed to heft him –wriggling and complaining– into his arms, he rose from the console and carried him to their makeshift recharging mat in the main area of the pod.

Once Blurr was laid beneath his frame, encased in his arms, Shockwave could not help but pause – much to Blurr's loud dismay– and examine the moment. The pod's electrical systems hummed around them while light from the stars seeped through the windows, drenching his vision in smoldering orange hues. Blocked from the starlight by Shockwave's frame, Blurr's plating glimmered from blue-black shadow, optics cool pinpoints that watched him with glowing, unrestrained anticipation. Shockwave's spark *ached*. A touch to the side of his courier's windshield was all that was needed for Blurr to open his chestplates, pressing into Shockwave's touch as large fingers caressed the delicate silver outer shell of his spark casing.

“Shock- wave-! Pleasepleaseplease-” Blurr cried, legs spread and valve bared invitingly, spinal struts curving as his unique spark was touched in slow, indulgent strokes. Their height difference was difficult to navigate normally, but it was made even more so when the added mass from Blurr's carriage was factored in. Shockwave forewent a spark merge -for the moment- and pinned Blurr's arms above his helm with his gun-arm. He sheathed his spike in one practiced, smooth movement, burying himself in his conjunx's loose valve.

Each rapid shift in facial expression on Blurr's face was captivating, and Shockwave watched, fascinated with every crinkle and crease in white plating. Each thrust had Blurr's helm lolling back, crest brushing the mesh blankets, valve tightening around Shockwave's spike when he overloaded. Shockwave cupped the side of Blurr's helm, thumb brushing over his glossy cheek as he kept his pace, pushing the smaller bot through his overload and near to the point of hypersensitivity, carefully aware of Blurr's swift-changing emotions through their bond.

Just as the stimulation became too much -Blurr's legs stiffening and brow ridges pinching together in discomfort- Shockwave slowed his pace. The sudden shift sent them both over and Shockwave rutted until the tip of his spike bumped against the sealed entrance to Blurr's gestation tank. He emptied himself there, pressed close to ensure nothing escaped.

He had no access to the varied types of fuel he'd kept in his reserves back in Iacon, and so he was unable to enrich Blurr's diet with the nutrients needed for their sparkling's development. But at the very least, the nanites supplied from him during their numerous interfaces would be able to absorb through the semi-permeable mesh membrane that sealed Blurr's tank and sustain their sparkling through its last stages of development until they reached Cybertron. It was an adequate temporary solution, and a task he had *no* qualms about completing.

Blurr was pliant and relaxed when Shockwave slumped next to him. His helm turned, optic-level with Shockwave as he smiled. His chestplates were still open, radiant blue spark visibly jumping and pulsing to its own wild, overjoyed rhythm. Thin fingers reached out and tugged pointedly at Shockwave's broad chassis and though tired, Shockwave could not deny the want to join their sparks. Lying on their sides, curled close with chassis pressed together, their sparks intertwined in a lazy, indulgent merge.

He could not often use that word – *lazy*- in relation to Blurr, but that was the only way to describe him in that moment, narrow optics shuttering as their sparks swelled and softly drifted into overload, his arms wrapped loosely around Shockwave's shoulders. It was only after their sparks had separated and their chestplates shut that he realized Blurr had fallen into recharge, their bond calm and content in the back of his processor.

Strangely energized, Shockwave's systems did not require recharge. He lied there for a long time, content to listen to the soft purring of Blurr's powerful engine while his own processor slowed from its heightened state. A sense of... *pride* filtered in from his spark and filled his processor with the emotion. His conjunx was beautiful in recharge; lying still enough that one could study every harsh sweep and aerodynamic curve in his frame. Shockwave watched him rest until he felt it appropriate to rise and search for something to wipe down their frames.

After he'd cleaned their plating and closed Blurr's interface paneling, he left to check on Wheelie.

Their creation was fine, already burbling away to himself while he played with a toy inside one of the Quintesson recharge chambers they'd stuffed with mesh blankets. He'd been napping when they'd left him but now he squealed as he noticed Shockwave approaching, orange servos raised in greeting.

"Gergon-gergon!" He shrieked, echoing the word twice, as was his habit of late. Shockwave raised him from the chamber with care.

"Yes, we will refuel." He agreed absently, rooting around their supplies for a tube of energon. Shockwave did not trust Quintesson energon enough to allow Wheelie to consume it, but fortunately Blurr's fuel filtration systems were active due to carriage, and he had been able to filter a couple tubes worth of clean energon for Wheelie. Settling on their makeshift recharge mat, Wheelie in his arms and Blurr sprawled beside him, Shockwave set to the task of fueling their tempestuous creation.

"No!" Wheelie screamed, little legs pushing at Shockwave's hold on him. He had grown spoiled; used to feeding from Blurr's frame. His faceplates were screwed into a horrible grimace while he sobbed and shrieked, aggressively rejecting the tube of energon each time it was held to his intake. "*Nooo!*"

Blurr recharged soundly beside them, only occasionally kicking and flopping his limbs across the mat.

"You must." Shockwave argued.

Wheelie wailed so loudly that his vocalizer shorted out. Shockwave waited, patiently, for the sparkling to calm before reattempting to fuel him. It took much trial and error but eventually Wheelie succumbed to his hunger and allowed Shockwave to pour the energon into his intake with only a few petulant noises. Not long after his tank had been filled, Wheelie began squirming and whining to be let down.

Shockwave allowed it. All Wheelie wanted was to crawl to Blurr and grab his unconscious faceplates, Shockwave only intervened when their sparkling went to yank the courier's thin nasal ridge. Wheelie chuffed at being denied but was quickly distracted by Haywire's fledgling EM field. It had become more active in recent cycles, reaching out with incomprehensible signals to any mechanism within reach. It was endlessly fascinating to Shockwave, as he had never thought to study carriage or frame-born mechanism development, and just as fascinating to Wheelie, who flopped across Blurr's abdominal plating, cheek pressed close as he waited for pulses of Haywire's EM field to stretch over him.

He squealed, minuscule wheels rolling in excitement whenever he felt the other's field. Shockwave doubted Wheelie understood the source of the field, and was simply reacting to the new sensation, but the sight still made something within his chassis loosen with affection.

His purple servo nearly engulfed the entirety of Wheelie's frame as he softly pet his orange helm, causing the sparkling to beep at him contentedly.

Shockwave let the sparkling entertain himself on his own after a moment, his yellow gaze drifting to peer out of one of the pod's windows, dimming in contemplation.

Cybertron's surface grew nearer and nearer by the cycle and Shockwave found himself plotting his next steps for when they landed. Their stay in the escape pod over the past deca-cycle had been a much-needed reprieve, but reality would soon return, and their situation would soon change. Blurr was due for emergence within the next quartex, perhaps sooner if the planet's surface conditions proved stressful, and while Shockwave was confident in his surgical skill and knowledge of Cybertronian anatomy; he was not a *medic*. His expertise lay in deconstructing Cybertronians, repurposing and exploring their frames to further both the Decepticon war effort as well as sate his own scientific curiosity. This, paired with their lack of adequate medical equipment, was a cause for concern.

The only meagre solution he had was a second laboratory of his in the south, in Vos where much of the planet appeared to have avoided damage, that contained equipment that could prove beneficial when Blurr entered emergence. If they could reach it in time.

The pod's current trajectory would, if he and Blurr had deciphered the console correctly, place them near Vos when they landed. From such a fortunate landing destination, it would be almost *easy* to get to Vos.

If all proceeded ideally, they would have little to worry about.

Out of the silence of the pod, Blurr's fans kicked on in a sudden, frantic burst and spun to their highest setting, whirring with an uncharacteristic lack of control.

Shockwave startled. Finials snapped back at the noise, and he lagged for the barest klik before lurching forward to scoop Wheelie away from his place at Blurr's side as the smaller bot convulsed, blunt servos clawing at mesh blankets and legs kicking viciously. Shockwave could barely approach- thin blue limbs flailed and spinal struts arched while Blurr gasped, his plating flaring out and clamping down in erratic waves. All the Decepticon could do was stuff Wheelie into the crook of his gun arm and continue to try and reach out and restrain the other before he hurt himself or-

Colder than ice, biting like liquid hydrogen through his lines as it spread from the center of his chassis; their spark bond cut off. As if it never were. Shockwave froze, unable to move, processor trapped in throes of pure panic and terror while his spark felt half offline.

Unnatural- it was unnatural, it was *wrong*. It could not be; Blurr was online in front of him, moving and venting in sluggish uneven gasps. He had not died and yet it felt as if he had and Shockwave was left with only a frigid, mutilated half of himself that sputtered pathetically in his chassis, unable to function without its counterpart.

"*Blurr!*" He rasped, leaning forward.

Blurr's servos latched onto him, grip tight with unnatural strength as his optics opened. The light from them was fever-bright and several shades off than was normal, almost a hue of green. His facial plating contorted into expressions he had never made before, out of place and disorienting to behold, as if someone else were making them.

"Follow-!" Blurr cried, vocalizer high and wispy and laced with static.

He begged, staring directly at Shockwave but at the same time focused on something else, something far beyond what was in front of him. He spoke again but his voice became slow and clear, each word enunciated with thoughtful rolls of his glossa. Completely unlike himself in every way:

"Remember to follow and watch the sky, the star, see the ash beneath your pedes curl and you will find- you will- you will- you-youyouyou-" A natural rapid cadence returned to Blurr voice at the end of his speech before he sank to the floor, dead limp with optics blackened and fans halted to motionless silence.

Shockwave picked him up and cradled his spiritless frame close. The massive servo that cupped the back of Blurr's helm trembled. Wheelie wailed at his side.

Shockwave felt empty, half of his spark was gone and he could not sever himself from his emotions enough to calm himself and find out *why* or determine how to mend whatever glitch or injury had caused this. He did not *understand*-

Blurr's chassis heaved once, fans cycling to life in their usual controlled ferocity. His optical shutters closed on black optics, then lifted to reveal a healthy blue glow. Their bond snapped into re-existence in a brilliant, all-encompassing wave of heat and love, the radiance of it so soothing that all Shockwave could do was shiver over Blurr's frame cradled in his arms.

He arched a brow ridge, calm confusion filtering across their bond. "Shockwave-what-?"

He scooted into a sitting position and noticed their sniffing sparkling. “Oh! Wheelie-Wheelie-Wheelie come here-come here-” He held their creation to his windshield and crooned his engine before turning his confusion back on his conjunx. “What-is-going-on-something-is-going-on- Shockwave what’s wrong you don’t feel right what happened tell me and don’t try to lie because something definitely-absolutely-certainly happened so tell-me-tell-me come on tell me-”

“You do not-” Shockwave paused, rattled by experience. “-remember?”

Blurr cocked his helm to the side and shrugged. “Remember-what-exactly that’s not a very specific question maybe include some details because there are a lot of things that happen and lot of things I remember and-”

“What occurred just moments ago, the things you said, you cannot recall them?” Shockwave stroked his palm reverently over the back of Blurr’s helm, single optic focused with heated intensity.

Blurr flustered beneath his attention.

“I-was-talking-? Are you sure because you would think I would remember talking if I was talking but I guess not but that does happen I do talk during recharge though not-too-often but Moonracer used to-” He stopped, pain seeping through their bond. Shockwave recognized the designation as a femme from Blurr’s memory files. One that he had apparently been close to. Shockwave could not say he felt any remorse for the offline femme –indeed, he would not suffer *sharing* Blurr’s affections, platonic or otherwise, with another mechanism aside from their creations– but he did feel some form of regret for the hurt such a loss caused *his* courier. “But anyway it doesn’t happen often but that’s probably what happened just now so no worries no problem it’s fine-I’m fine-we’re fine.”

Unconvinced, he pulled his conjunx close and inspected him from helm to pede, testing his reflexes and external systems. Blurr complained, nasal ridge crinkling with annoyance until he winced and placed a servo on his stomach plates. Shockwave was instantly on alert.

“No-no-no it’s okay!” Blurr protested at the purple mech’s concern. “Haywire’s all good but he’s not happy that’s-for-sure.”

The protest was useless. After checking Blurr a second time for injuries and finding none, Shockwave crushed the other bot in a constricting embrace, EM field like a lead blanket across both Wheelie and Blurr’s frames.

“Oh.” Blurr turned to look at him, one cheek smushed to the purple bot’s expansive chestplate.

A slim servo patted the side of Shockwave blocky helm. “You’re really-truly-honestly scared-?”

Shockwave stilled. Uncertain if he wished to admit to such weakness aloud. It was already humiliatingly apparent across their bond, in his field, and his behavior.

“Your spark...” He began. “It was as if you offlined. I could not feel you.”

Blurr’s optics widened. He wriggled in Shockwave’s arms until he could embrace him back. “I’m okay Shockwave really-really-really I’d never leave you not if I could help it and see I’m functioning exactly as I should be you checked me over twice and see look-look-look-!”

His chestplates opened and Shockwave could not actually look and confirm, as their chassis were pressed together, but the burning heat against his armor was enough. He relaxed, finials drooping and optic dimming. His own chestplates opened and their sparks caressed one another- not a merge or interface, merely a brush to confirm the other existed. Even Wheelie relaxed from where he’d been momentarily sidelined, tiny frame held aloft in the crook of Blurr’s right arm and pressed to the side of Shockwave’s waist.

“All-better-now-?” Blurr teased, rubbing his thumb affectionately across a square finial.

“Yes.” The reply was blunt. Shockwave tilted into the slim servo caressing his helm, relief drenching their bond while he echoed himself aloud: “*Yes.*”

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“I see them!” Firestar cried, positioned at the top of the highest building she could find.

Ash and dust fell in great black blankets across every inch of the surface she could see, long clouds of smoke and fire still cutting across the sky above their helms. Something had happened and they weren’t sure *what* just yet, but it had to have been something big for the majority of the planet to be affected like this. Hopefully, with Greenlight and Nacelle returning early from their mission to recover Blurr -their frames spotted as tiny blips on the horizon by Firestar’s keen optics- the Autobots would get a better picture of what was going on.

Each of them had their theories, with Chromia and Alpha Trion bickering over whether a battle had taken place between Shockwave’s drone forces and the Quintessons, and Firestar privately thinking it was more of a question of *who* had won, rather than *if* they had even fought at all. It was obvious a battle had taken place, but the identity of the winner remained unknown.

Firestar, for once, found herself rooting for the Decepticon.

Once Greenlight and Nacelle were close enough, she pinged them coordinates to their temporary camp and then clambered down from her perch to join the others.

Chromia gripped her by the shoulder pauldron and gave her a firm, appreciative shake. Her smile was grim, yet she attempted to be reassuring in a way Firestar could appreciate.

“Thanks Firestar.”

She ducked her helm. “Sure thing, Chromia.”

After a moment they awkwardly parted ways. Talking to their new leader was often stilted; Chromia obviously did not want the responsibility of leadership and was visibly stressed by Elita One’s declining health, but Firestar admired her resolve to stick with it till the end. They all had to stay strong and keep going, because all they had now was each other.

Groaning, Firestar slumped onto a chunk of toppled column which now served as a campfire bench. They’d set up a little fire; the south wasn’t particularly cold in comparison to Iacon or Polyhex, but with the ash clouding the sky it did get dark.

“Nervous?” Firestar questioned the bot to her right. Lancer gave no indication of having heard her beside a muted huff from her engine. She sat with her legs drawn up to her chassis and chin resting on her knee-joints, staring moodily at the fire.

Firestar didn’t forgive Greenlight for what she’d done... but she also couldn’t fully blame her either. Firestar couldn’t shake the feeling that she was also at fault for their situation; if she had never botched their energon run all those cycles ago, then the Decepticons would never have found their base, and maybe then... Maybe then Moonracer would still be alive and Greenlight would never have been put in a position to choose between searching for Blurr or escaping capture.

Guilt weighed on her spark. She knew what it was like to make a mistake and have it blow up in her faceplates.

Lancer continued to mope, EM field tight and strained. Firestar decided to scoot closer and gently bump shoulder pauldrons with the larger femme. Lancer glanced at her from the corner of her optics before she sighed, plating jittering anxiously on protoform as it released some tension.

“I just hope he’s okay.” She replied, at last. Firestar hummed and stared at the fire in thought.

“He’s fast. He could’ve gotten away.”

“Could have.” Lancer grunted. “But with whatever happened, who knows if he’s survived this too.” She picked at a bit of grime on her left gauntlet. “I miss them.”

Them. Moonracer, Blurr, Wheelie. The former two had been adults but they’d still been the youngest of their team besides Wheelie. It felt wrong that the brightest and newest of them had been the ones affected the most devastatingly. And Blurr... Firestar didn’t like how that seeker had described Shockwave’s treatment of him. It made her sick. Blurr was a kind, somewhat neurotic, *attractive* mech -in the way that most speedsters were- while Shockwave was cold and cruel and supposedly emotionless.

Firestar could only hope the Decepticon was emotionless enough that he lacked an interface drive.

She slouched further, leaning on Lancer for support. "I miss them too."

Her protoform ached, she hadn't thought it possible, but it *did*. Carrying around her teammates and that heavy seeker had taken a toll. Her red armor was dull and marred by scratches and dents- absolutely appalling to her, as she was used to at least being able to have a moment to clean herself. Her appearance was the one thing she'd had some control over, but it seemed that too was now taken from her.

Her lackluster plating clenched involuntarily when the dull hum from an approaching jet engine grew into a deafening roar as he appeared over their helmets, circling once, twice, before transforming in a graceful roll of plating to land near their campfire. Greenlight looked ridiculously small; the two-wheeler held like a youngling in his massive arms. Firestar found it both amusing and terrifying- being around a warframe so much larger than any of them left her uncomfortable and on edge.

The seeker released Greenlight when his pedes were flat on the surface, causing the femme to flop to the ground painfully.

Lancer tensed beside Firestar, EM field spiking with concern until she reigned herself in and feigned indifference.

"Hey- *warn* me next time!" Greenlight wobbled on her pedes when she righted herself.

Nacelle scoffed, crossed his arms over his red turbines, and looked down his nasal ridge at her. "There won't be a next time."

Chromia and Alpha Trion rushed into the small clearing, all but trampling the small campfire in their haste to approach. The ancient mech's joints creaked audibly, but he could move with a surprising limberness when he wished to.

Greenlight stiffened, teardrop finials snapping to attention. "Chromia! I'm sorry- we weren't able to enter Iacon in time- something happened, something *huge*."

Chromia scrutinized the seeker and two-wheeler's frames; both streaked with ash and dust, vague burn marks scattered across their limbs as if they'd been caught by falling flaming debris. She frowned; disappointment apparent.

"Was it Shockwave? Did you see *anyone*?"

Nacelle's wings tensed and flexed at the designation, a scowl on his face. "There was no activity in Iacon from what we could see from outside the borders. We got as close as Polyhex before a ship crashed into the surface. We think it was orbiting the planet, just outside the atmosphere." The seeker seemed strangely subdued. Unsettled by something.

"I don't see how one ship crashing could have caused all of this." Chromia's tone was disbelieving.

Greenlight and the seeker exchanged a tired and haunted look. “Chromia... that ship, I- I've never seen anything like it. It was *massive*. After it hit... I don't think Iacon *exists* anymore. Or Polyhex, or Nova Cronum. If anyone was there when it hit...”

“There likely wasn't anyone there.” Nacelle cut in; red faceplates flat. “We would've seen some sign of Shockwave's drones if they were there, trying to defend the city. I believe he may have relocated in a rush-” his lowly muttered ‘*without me*’ was nearly inaudible, but Firestar heard it. “-and undoubtedly brought along that little racer you're all so concerned about. He was interested in him, and Shockwave doesn't do *passing* interests.”

Unease rippled throughout the femmes present. Alpha Trion spoke up.

“Have you seen any Quintesson activity since their ship's destruction?”

Both shook their helms in a negative. “There were some smaller ships near Polyhex that may have escaped the crash, but the main ship burnt to a crisp in the atmosphere before it even touched the surface, more slag than ship at that point. Doubt any of them survived.” Nacelle's red lipplates quirked in bitter amusement before he scowled again. “Shockwave is still out there. I know it. The way that ship was taken down, *efficiently*, has Shockwave written all over it and If I know anything from working under him for so long, it's that he always engineers his plans to turn out in his favor, no matter the setbacks or consequences.”

Chromia bit her lower lipplate and glanced at Alpha Trion, servos placed on her hips. He looked back at her, faceplates carefully neutral. It was obvious they were talking over private comms.

Chromia's vents sighed and her shoulders sagged. “Scrap.”

She pinched the bridge of her nasal ridge before gathering herself. “Okay. New plan: we're all going to Vos to find that key. After that... we'll see what we can do about Shockwave and Blurr. And *you*-” Chromia pointed at Nacelle, voice sharp. Nacelle tensed, wings hiking.

“...Thank you.” Chromia ground out, reluctant yet genuine. Nacelle's optics grew wide in shock. “Thank you for helping us, even if it didn't go as planned. None of us would have been able to reach Iacon as quickly. You... I don't imagine you'd want to stay with us, but you're welcome to.”

Nacelle looked thrown. Firestar suspected he wasn't thanked for his help very often. “I...” He fidgeted, glancing at the miniscule femmes around him. “I may have to think about that.”

“Then think about it.” Chromia gruffed, and moved on, apparently done with the conversation. “All of you get some recharge. We leave in three joors, once Firestar has recuperated.”

With that, the group scattered slowly, and Firestar hunched bitterly on her toppled column, heat from the fire warming her aching struts. It was *rough* being the only one with a truck bed that could carry Elita One for long distances.

Alpha Trion and Chromia left, presumably to continue bickering over who got to watch Elita One's comatose frame, while Nacelle retreated a short distance, visibly rattled. Lancer and Greenlight vanished at the same time, probably into one of the abandoned buildings nearby.

Firestar wanted to eavesdrop on the conversation they were having. *Badly*. She was nosy at spark, she could not deny it, and the drama of whatever they could be talking about was undoubtedly juicy. But no, it would be rude of her to do that...

...and Greenlight's finial sensors would probably catch her.

Mildly annoyed, exhausted, and disappointed, Firestar slid down the length of the column and lied on it, pillowing her helm on her yellow servos.

She recharged for a joor, fitfully, until a scraping, clanging noise dragged her from her rest. She was hesitant to open her optical shutters at first, hoping the noises weren't the sounds of Greenlight and Lancer make-up interfacing nearby or something equally traumatic, but after a few breems her audials picked up low cursing from a mech's vocalizer.

Raising herself into a sitting position, she onlined her optics to see Nacelle struggling to clean the vents on his lower back, a brush that looked seeker-specific in his servos, perhaps retrieved from his subspace. Firestar arched a brow ridge, amused. It did not look like the seeker was flexible enough to reach much and he struggled, growing more and more irritated by the klik.

Her first instinct was to offer help, and she stood to do that, but stopped short.

Help a Decepticon? One that had attacked them and injured Elita One? Firestar was uneasy about him. Though... Chromia had asked him to stay, and the blue femme was wildly protective of Elita, so if she trusted him, that said something. And he had helped them, even though he could've flown off the moment they'd refueled him.

Some small yet steadily growing voice in the back of her processor told her that maybe, just maybe, things like *Autobot* and *Decepticon* didn't matter so much anymore. It was only... *them*, all of them, now. And they were so few in number that factions felt as meaningless and empty as Cybertron was. What was the point in fighting?

Processor made; she approached him with caution.

"Need some help?"

Nacelle yelped, wings flapping as he twisted to face her. He stared at her with suspicion. "No." He hissed, baring his fangs before he turned to continue his efforts.

"You sure?"

Nacelle ignored her. She waited and watched his pitiful attempts until he gave up, wings drooping. He glanced at her from the corner of his red optics.

"Why would you want to help me?"

Firestar rolled her optics. “You helped us. It seems fair to reciprocate. Besides, you woke me up.”

Leaning back to look at her face-to-face, Nacelle appraised her, crimson optics roving over her form. She came up to Nacelle’s chestplates when he was seated, and she was glad he was seated. She didn’t think she could handle approaching him then he stood to his full, intimidating height.

“Your designation is Firestar?” He questioned.

“Obviously.” She placed her servos on her scuffed hips. “Who else would actually be trying to recharge? Anyway, are you going to let me help you or not? I could be sleeping right now.”

Nacelle studied at her for a long moment, expression guarded, before he held the brush out.

She set to work, efficient and clinical to avoid making the seeker uncomfortable. She quickly realized why the seeker was so insistent about cleaning his vents; ash had built up in thick clumps, causing air to pump out in strained, guttural puffs. Obviously quite uncomfortable. Nacelle sat in front of her while she sat at his side and reached around his waist to clean his vents. It would have been easier to sit behind him, but as on-edge and tense as he was, she doubted he would’ve been okay with having her out of his sight.

“There.” She scooted back and gave the seeker a reassuring pat on the shoulder pauldron before could think about it. “Try it now.”

Air filtered easily through the vents in a soft *whoosh* and he relaxed, his red faceplates softening.

“...Thanks.” He muttered, carefully grasping the brush with his claws. His expression turned thoughtful.

“No problem.” Firestar replied, and shifted to stand-

“-I’m sorry for calling you ugly.” His wings fidgeted. “Earlier.”

She paused and looked back at him. An incredulous laugh bubbled out of her before she could stop it. It surprised her- she hadn’t laughed in quartexes. “Thanks, I guess?” She smirked. “But I can’t say I’m sorry for calling you heavy.”

Nacelle’s plating fluffed, the reminder of the insult making him flare with irritation before it ebbed away, and he peered at her with a new light in his optics. “I suppose I can allow that one comment. *Once*. Since it must be terribly hard for a mechanism so miniscule as you to carry anything, let alone a warframe like myself.”

Firestar narrowed her optics. “Obviously. It’s *so* hard.” Her voice was deadpan, lips twisted down.

Nacelle seemed to ignore her shift in tone. He looked at her clearly, red optics glinting.

He was very red, Firestar noticed. It was obvious of course, but up close it became apparent just *how* red he was, not a single accent color to break the shade. Even his protoform seemed naturally red in the areas that peeked through gaps in his armor.

“You seem tired.” He commented, tone not quite apologetic; more just slightly guilty. “I didn’t mean to wake you.”

She crossed her arms over her chestplates and tried to stop herself from flexing her dull plating self-consciously. “You try carrying your team across the planet in your alt-mode for *quartexes*. Of course I’m tired.” she vented to calm herself, then shrugged. “It’s okay, though. I know you didn’t mean to. I’m... glad I could help.”

“You didn’t have to help; you don’t truly owe me any debt.”

Firestar pursed her lipplates and avoided his optics, scanning the dark horizon. “Maybe I just didn’t see any reason *not* to help. Consider that?”

Nacelle scoffed. “There are plenty reasons. We are enemies.”

“Are we?” Firestar looked at him, and he seemed taken aback by the fire in her optics. “If we are, then why did you help us?”

“For fuel.” He replied, too easily.

Firestar leaned closer. “I don’t believe you.”

Nacelle’s gaze was searching and open, vulnerable in a way that made her plating crawl. He was looking for a reason to stay.

“When will our fighting end?” She asked, a little more wistful than she’d meant to be. “When we are all offline, or when Cybertron is completely destroyed? I guess I just don’t see our factions as a valid reason to not help anymore. The reasons that drove us to start fighting don’t matter if there’s no one left to fight *for*. We’re so few now and we’ve all lost so much. Why not be kind, or helpful?” A crease formed between his brow ridges as he considered her words.

Firestar extended a yellow servo and Nacelle stared at it.

“Why not stay together, and try something new?”

A long, tremulous moment passed before he reached out and held her servo in his, larger digits engulfing hers. It made her nervous at first, but as he held her and didn’t crush her or claw her, she relaxed.

“You make a good point, *Firestar*.” A smirk cracked across his tired faceplates, fanged denta peeking out. “Why not?”

Chapter End Notes

got carried away w/ firestars POV oops.

ps. so sorry for the late update!! I saw ROTB and got mirage brainrot for two months and was unable to find insp to write for a bit, back on it though! I also did love Airazor too even though they did her dirty, and im ngl I do rewatch the beast wars episode where she gets 'born' a lot as inspiration for this fic. <3

Chapter 17

“The heart is not a logical organ.”

-Star Trek

Blurr visibly vibrated with pent up energy where he was bent over, arms held out to grasp Wheelie's servos as he guided their sparkling to walk across the floor on two pedes.

“You can do it Wheelie-Wheelie-Wheelie you can do it just put one pede in front of the other and then another and another and then you'll be able to walk all the time and then run and then just imagine how much-much-much fun it will be when we can run together every cycle doesn't that sound fun huh-” Blurr cooed. Wheelie glanced at him and beeped nonsense before refocusing on Shockwave, who was calmly crouched on the other side of the pod.

“Come here, Wheelie.” He beckoned; single servo outstretched. Wheelie shrieked with glee and his stubby legs kicked faster, trying to run before he could even walk properly, pedes clanking on the floor. Blurr encouraged him to continue, shuffling forward.

Shockwave would never mention such an observation aloud, as he did possess some tact, but Blurr's fluid runner's gait had taken on a much more burdened, waddling look as of late.

Wheelie *could* walk, but it was often toddling and only lasted a few steps. They had taken to practicing walking for a few breems each cycle to build Wheelie's strength and help his frame's development. That, and they had little else to do.

“You must release him if we are ever to encourage him to walk farther than five steps.”

Blurr shot him a glare. “But what if he falls and bumps his helm or dislocates a leg or an arm or breaks his nasal ridge or dents his plating or-or-or- oh you know what I mean there are so many bad possibilities and I don't-”

“-Release him yet remain close, so if he falls you will be near to catch him. It is highly unlikely he would be injured that way, Blurr.”

Nervous, Blurr released his grip in increments. Wheelie continued with confident -if uncoordinated- steps toward Shockwave. He sprinted the last stretch, nearly tripping over himself in haste. Blurr was right behind Wheelie the entire time and when the two reached

Shockwave, he scooped both of them from the floor and into his arms. Wheelie squealed delightedly at being raised so high so swiftly, servos drumming on Shockwave's chassis.

He set them down carefully, touch lingering on Blurr's plating. His courier rolled onto the tips of his pedes with white faceplates tipped upward, presumably to leave a kiss on some part of Shockwave's blocky helm. Shockwave's finials quivered in subtle anticipation, but when Blurr was mere micrometers from him, Wheelie purged; spitting curdled energon across Blurr's frame.

Blurr squinted in annoyance and settled on flat pedes.

"Oh-look-at-all-this-!" He huffed and held Wheelie at arm's length to avoid smearing more regurgitated energon across their frames. A futile action; it had dripped into both of their transformation seams, leaving only Shockwave unscathed. "I'll be right back in-just-two-kliks-"

"Do you require assistance?" Shockwave stepped forward to follow Blurr to the washrack but a servo pressed to the middle of his chestplate stopped him.

"I've got this handled Shockwave don't-don't-don't worry about it!"

Then Shockwave was alone.

He was aware that he had been far too... attached to Blurr since the incident several cycles ago, but he was disinclined to curb his behavior. There were far too many aspects of the incident that he still could not understand, and he could not predict if -or when- it would happen again.

To busy himself and distract from the discomfort of separation, he approached the control console to check on the status of their pod's descent.

He needn't have checked, the view outside the front window was enough to confirm that they would likely land within the next cycle; the surface of Cybertron near enough that he could've simply opened the escape hatch and flown down a short distance. But he could not do that. His flight thrusters had been rendered nonfunctional when his frame had overheated, the heat unfortunately resulting in important yet delicate wiring melting beyond repair. And- and even if he did still possess the ability to fly, he would not wish to do it. He desired more time with Blurr; reluctant to leave what felt stable and safe.

At some point during his ruminations, Blurr slipped under his outstretched arm to squeeze closer to the console and window, his freshly cleaned white-blue armor glimmering temptingly under the pod's hazy artificial lights. "We're so-so-so close! Can you believe it I can't believe it I can't wait to stretch my legs and get out of this boring-cramped-terrible-awful pod-"

With a servo on the back of Blurr's waist, Shockwave led him away from the window, their bond reverberating with little thrums of his acknowledgement as he listened to the speedster ramble.

They ended up on their makeshift recharge mat, Shockwave's upper frame propped against a wall while Blurr sat between his legs, his back kibble pressed to Shockwave's chest.

"You indulge him." Shockwave commented while Wheelie fueled from Blurr's frame, his little form curled against a blue windshield, suckling contentedly as he replenished the fuel he'd lost. "It will be difficult to wean him once Haywire emerges."

Vents huffed at him. "But-it's-so-easy-this-way-!"

"Perhaps." Shockwave rasped. His servo reached around to cup Blurr's abdominal plates and feel Haywire rattle around in his tank. "But the strain on your frame will double. It is not sustainable."

Blurr tensed, anxiety spiking. Shockwave knew what it was that unsettled him.

"We will land soon." Shockwave reminded, aiming to soothe Blurr's anxiety with facts. "And you know of my second laboratory in Vos. We will reach it and you will not be left to enter emergence without equipment or aid. You have a high likelihood of survival; do not fret."

Blurr craned his neck cabling to stare at him incredulously.

"That is absolutely-completely-definitely *not* the comforting statement you think it is Shockwave-Shockwave but luckily-for-you I understand the intention behind it *despite* your-lacking-execution-"

Despite Blurr's insistence that Shockwave's reassurances were lacking, the racer seemed to calm anyway. His engine lulled and he grew lax, *nearly* falling into recharge. Carriage wore on him and it was glaringly obvious; his natural hyperactive state seemed to be no match for the bouts of exhaustion that came upon him now.

But Blurr fought the exhaustion despite how irrational it was to do so. He dragged himself from Shockwave's lap to put Wheelie into one of the Quintesson recharge chambers –a makeshift crib of sorts- before returning.

Shockwave repositioned himself to lie flat on the mat, processor beginning the first sequences to shut down and enter recharge when he felt a weight settle across his hips. Onlining his optic, he found Blurr staring at him expectantly.

"Recharging now would be a responsible decision. We are likely to land on the surface next cycle, and you will need to save your energy for our journey to Vos."

Blurr puffed his plating. "But I'm not tired and neither are you so don't even try to act uninterested so I'll go to sleep because that is not going to happen no-way-no-way-no-way-!"

Shockwave *was* interested, but he doubted Blurr would last very long before succumbing to his exhaustion.

"You are confident that you do not require recharge?"

Blurr nodded a vigorous affirmative but their bond contradicted him, making it transparent that his desire warred strongly with encroaching fatigue. However, Shockwave decided to humor him, if only to prove his point.

Shockwave's modesty cover retracted- spike pressurizing with a muted *hiss* to jut between their frames. Blurr's engine purred and he leaned down to press a hurried, yet soft, kiss to a corner of Shockwave's helm before he retracted his valve cover and aligned their interfaces.

"Oh," He rasped when Blurr sank onto his spike, blue knee joints shuffling to find the best position on either side of Shockwave's thighs. Shockwave tried to grasp Blurr's waist and control the pace but his servo was fussily smacked away. Blurr did one experimental bounce, hesitant and unsure, before he began riding his spike with every ounce of his usual vigor.

"*Blurr-*" Shockwave's frame twitched but otherwise could not move. His vocalizer spilled choked, rasping groans with every tight squeeze of Blurr's calipers around his spike. Soft, wet noises and clanking metal echoed around the pod as drenched valve folds stretched to their limit and hips rode wildly, faster and faster-

-until Blurr slowed, failing to reach climax as his optical shutters drooped and his movements became labored. His fans heaved and he cupped the underside of his bump in an attempt to relieve some of the weight there.

Shockwave regained his composure. His point was made; Blurr was exhausted, listing to the left, vents yawning while he bounced erratically. Shockwave took the matter into his own servo. He gripped Blurr's frame for leverage and then *pounded* up into his pulsing valve, chasing their release. His conjunx squealed, optics brightening in surprise while he went limp, allowing Shockwave to manipulate his frame however he wished.

Overload took Shockwave and his thrusts stuttered while bliss wracked through his circuits. Blurr followed, the gears in his knees clicking and valve squeezing before he was knocked into recharge, collapsing onto Shockwave's chassis with a *thump*.

He did not move after that, content to lie through the night-cycle with Blurr sprawled over him, the racer's engine rumbling like far-off thunder during an acid storm. Shockwave found himself hesitant to recharge and the joors passed by on his chronometer, stars sliding across the sky outside their pod before dipping into the horizon when Hadeen eventually crept into view. Their sun wavered through thick clouds of ash and smoke; murky red and foreboding to behold.

Blurr remained in recharge, peaceful and serene with his fingers curled by his face and cheek pressed to Shockwave's chestplate.

Sunlight bathed his lithe frame and Shockwave was utterly enamored, unable to look away from the sight. He had never felt such... *happiness*. Haywire's drowsy little EM field fluttered against him and the sensation only made his contentment grow.

The tranquil moment was ruined when alarms blared into existence, lighting the console at the front of the pod with a strobe of colors. Shockwave jerked, arms crushing Blurr close in sudden fear.

Blurr woke with a confused frown, squirming in Shockwave's arms.

"We-must-be-landing-!" He cried after a klik, joyous. He detangled himself and used Shockwave's frame as leverage to stand before sprinting into the other room to retrieve Wheelie.

Shockwave stumbled after him, both of them meeting at the console, a groggy Wheelie propped on his carrier's hip.

Outside, the ground rushed toward them in a blur of grey and black; smoke parting as their pod descended and finally hit the ground. The pod slid across metal terrain, occasionally hitting debris and natural formations, causing turbulence to the point that Shockwave had to steady Blurr by curling around his frame and gripping the back of a chair for support.

What felt like an eternity of deafening scraping and crashing ended in abrupt silence. Hot, smoke laden air swept over their frames as the escape hatch opened.

Blurr was first to leap toward the exit. Shockwave stopped him with a grip on his arm.

"We must collect the energon rods." He insisted. Blurr scowled, shaking off his hold to zip to their stash of provisions. Several tubes were hastily stuffed into his subspace, and he turned back to Shockwave, servos on his hips while his pede tapped with impatience.

"Well-well-well is this enough can we go-scam-get-outta-here already Shockwave-?"

Shockwave gathered the leftover tubes and approached the exit sedately, looking out at the ramp that led down to their decimated world with his external sensors set to their highest settings. "We may. However, take caution to-"

Blurr blew past him.

All the lines and struts of his frame betrayed his joy despite the haggard state of the surface. His helm tipped to the sky to catch thin sunbeams; arms stretched over his helm as he smiled and descended the ramp.

"It's-" Blurr went silent when his pedes made contact with the ground. His voice became strange, distant. "It's..."

He stiffened.

He took one step, then another, and another.

Ash was kicked into the air by his pedes and time seemed to slow. An impending sense of *something* spurred Shockwave to run after him.

A snap of biting cold was all the warning he got before their bond severed again. Shockwave fell to his knees on the ramp mid-stride, paint scraping off his legs. He was helpless to pursue his conjunx, who swiftly folded into his altmode despite the changes to his frame, with Wheelie placed in the nearly too-small hollow behind his windshield. The wild revving of the racer's engine had Shockwave's finials lowering-

And then he was gone.

A speed which Shockwave could never match carried Blurr away from the spindly city line of Vos and toward the endless open of the metallic plains.

Crushing silence encased him from all sides while he stared after his conjunx, whose silhouette disappeared beyond his sight, melding into the horizon. He had no hope of ever catching Blurr with his flight thrusters offline and his frame incapable of running at such a speed. His processor whirled- a battle between logical dissection of what had occurred and hopeless, horrible despair at the loss of his sparkbond once more. His servo shook and he could not stand it. It made him *weak*.

He nearly entered a forced reboot, processor unable to function with the lack of a logical explanation, when he noticed the trail of disturbed ash Blurr had left behind. There were curling patterns blown into the ash from the air displaced by Blurr's hovercar altmode. They were spun into intricate black designs, sprawling in a line that ended at Shockwave's pedes.

Shockwave's optic brightened. An audio file came to the forefront of his processor.

'-see the ash beneath your pedes curl-'

His helm raised to follow the trail of disturbed ash Blurr had left. As he followed it with his gaze, his line of sight ended at Hadeen on the horizon; the star's path across the sky aligned with the trail on the surface.

'-follow and watch the sky, the star-'

It did not make sense. How had Blurr predicted this in his recharge?

Perhaps... he had *planned* to escape? But if that was so, why warn Shockwave of it?

Shockwave could not linger on questions, time was short, and he had no way of knowing when the next wind would come and blow away the trail. He set off; jogging on heavy pedes to follow Blurr.

Hadeen's rays bore down on him with punishing heat whenever they peeked through gaps in the haze of smog which covered the sky, and his pedes struck the ground for joors, struts aching from the unnatural use of his frame.

All he could see ahead was the same barren landscape until a dilapidated structure came into view, abandoned and decaying in the wastes. Blurr's trail passed by it and Shockwave spared it a glance.

Crystal windows and old symbols met his curious gaze, unmistakable in their shape and purpose; a temple to Primus. Beyond the crumbling structure lay a multi-lane highway which Blurr's trail swerved to take. Shockwave stepped onto it and continued for several more joors with some difficulty as the ash trail was slightly more obscured by the rough texture of the pavement, but it was still present enough that he felt his direction was accurate. Silence surrounded him outside of the thinking of his steps, and the agony in his chassis made his

processor somewhat unfocused, tapered down to base instinct as he pursued his counterpart and creations.

The highway stretched on, endless until it wasn't. It dipped suddenly into an underground tunnel, slipping beneath the plains in a sharp, spiraling curve. Darkness enveloped Shockwave until he activated the light in his chestplate.

The trail ended. There was no ash beneath the surface level to scatter and so Shockwave scanned the road for clues, eventually spotting a cluster of ash gathered around an area of the wall just off the highway. He knelt and touched a servo to a narrow ashen pede print, finials flicking thoughtfully.

A service tunnel entryway in front of Blurr's tracks had been left slightly ajar and it took very little of his strength to pry the massive sliding door open and enter.

Pede tracks led him into a maze of thin blue hallways which he initially entered with confidence, but as the tracks faded, Shockwave found himself lost deep beneath the surface of Cybertron, where the tunnels became ancient and rusted and energon pipelines ran through the walls and floors. Their dim pink glow helped light his way, though he became uncertain as to which direction to turn when he came upon an intersection of tunnels where Blurr's tracks faded completely.

He paused, finials swiveling as he listened for any noise or signal, optic scanning for motion or pede prints.

Nothing greeted his senses aside from eerily thrumming walls; energon pulsing in somnambulant waves through thick pipes around him. After a moment, he carved a blunt line into a wall with his gun and took the left tunnel.

Anxiety-induced anger began to rise within him, clashing with the need to remain rational. Blank blue hallways irritated him. There was nothing; the trail had gone cold, he knew not where to search, and every turn in the labyrinth of tunnels set him back and wasted his fuel. Irritation mounting, Shockwave tensed, coming to a stop with his servo clenched into a fist at his side. His metal palm creaked and his optic brightened dangerously, yellow light creeping down the hall.

After taking a breem to compose himself, he continued walking, shoulders hiked and finials raised aggressively.

Then, he heard *it*- the faint patter of pedes from an adjacent hallway. He abruptly changed direction to advance on the source of the sound, stalking in long, powerful strides.

The noises grew closer, and he rounded a corner only to find *Autobots* in his way.

Three femmes froze under the yellow light of his optic while he towered over them. He *knew* them from Blurr's memories; the femmes that Shockwave thought had offlined in the power line explosion with two of his seekers. He had been aware that there were other spark signals on Cybertron that the Quintessons had found, but he had not imagined that they belonged to his conjunx's former, *supposedly deceased*, teammates.

Paranoia crept into his processor, logical possible explanations for their presence playing out in quick succession. Did they have Blurr? Were they *keeping* Blurr from him?

The blue femme at the front of the group –*Chromia*- came forward. Her gun was held tightly but her EM field expanded to convey a tentative neutrality. She opened her intake to break the intense silence but her gaze caught on his hips and thighs, and what she saw there silenced her. He knew what she'd spotted without needing to look and confirm himself.

Blue paint transfers littered the outsides of his armored thighs, unmistakably perverse in their origin due to their placement. Chromia's faceplates melted with horror and rage, recognizing the specific shade.

"*You.*" She hissed, raising her weapon. The other femmes followed her lead. "What did you do to *Blurr*?"

Shockwave... had little patience left for the display of aggression.

"Nothing..." Shockwave took a menacing step closer, the weight of his frame rattling the ground and causing the smaller femmes to wobble briefly. He tilted his helm down to watch each of them, his voice cold and monotone yet dripping with insinuation. "...that he did not *enjoy.*"

There was no way of determining who attacked first.

Chromia aimed her gun and cried "*Get him!*" at the same time that Shockwave lunged, overwhelmed by the desire to eradicate the femmes that stood between him and his counterpart. Logic dictated that killing the Autobots at the current moment would be a waste of his energy and time, and yet... it would be so very *satisfying* once the femmes were dealt with.

It was his weaponless frame against four armed bots and blaster fire peppered him in stinging waves. He lashed out, swinging his massive gun arm to smash a small green femme – *Greenlight*, his memories supplied- into a wall, crushing the center of her fragile frame. She crumpled to the ground while Chromia shot one of his finials and jumped him from the back, her fingers digging into his neck cabling and clawing, ripping, tearing whatever she could reach.

Shockwave reached behind himself and grabbed Chromia, hauling her over his helm and slamming her into the ground. The metal beneath their pedes proved stronger than the metal which composed Chromia's frame, and her armor splintered in many places, energon gushing from snapped fuel lines. An outraged cry sounded from down the hall and Shockwave turned as he was charged at and tackled around the middle by a surprisingly robust and heavy femme – *Lancer*. He stumbled two steps before he regained his footing and punched Lancer in the chassis. She withstood his first hit but the second had her wavering, her fists raised in defiance but blue optics unfocused and pained.

A third punch was in the making when something stung the backs of his knee joints, causing him to fall over. Greenlight held a small blaster behind him, a grimace on her face, and her free servo cupping her damaged chassis as she fired round after round into his frame.

Shockwave shielded his delicate optic from the blaster fire with his arm while his frame curled inward on the ground to protect himself. Lancer recovered and fell upon him, kicking his abdominal plates relentlessly, her heavy pedes smashing deep dents into his armor and crunching his internals.

A quiet, pained noise slipped from his vocalizer and Chromia pounced on the weakness. She limped to his huddled form, pink energon transuding from cracks along her frame and painting the right side of her white face with the terrible shade. In the pixelated, distorted vision of his single strained optic, she nearly looked like Blurr; small and blue and half-drenched in pink. But then she chuckled, dry and bitter, breaking the illusion.

“Does it hurt?” Her blaster nudged the side of a damaged finial. “I hope it does. I’d thought, for a mad moment, that we could’ve worked together, but now I know you really are a monster. You-” She cut off with a pained grunt, disgust ripping through her EM field as her optics dropped to his scuffed hip armor again. “You’ll *never* hurt Blurr again, you one-opticked sack of slag.”

The muzzle of her gun grew hotter where it pressed to the side of cranial casing, whining as it powered on.

Greenlight inched closer to his frame in the corner of his vision. A *mistake*. Shockwave took the opening; his massive purple servo closed around her waist and hurled her into Chromia, sending the two femmes crashing down the hallway. Lancer ceased kicking to instead attempt to punch out his optic, but he whacked her with his gun-arm and caught her helm inside his fist before she could roll away. He attempted to project a calm, controlled façade as he rose to his pedes with her dangling from his grasp, but it cracked- the depth of his rage rising to the surface.

“You’ll not keep me from what is mine.” His conjunx, his sparklings- they were his. *His*. He swept his gaze across all three femmes, lingering on a crouched Chromia. She glared back at him but he ignored her expression to contemplate Lancer in his hold. “I am almost impressed by the combined strength of your attack. In recognition of your creditable struggle, and Blurr’s... regard for you all, I will make your deaths *swift*.”

His fist tightened; Lancer’s frightened blue optics vanished behind his enclosing fingers.

“*No!*”

A jet missile exploded into his back kibble.

Heat, pain, and wafting smoke from his melted kibble distorted his vision when he fell, and the roar of a jet engine deafened him as Nacelle flew over-helm, the three tips of his alt-mode’s wings scraping the walls. Fire burned around Shockwave’s downed frame and he raised himself with shaking arms to watch Nacelle flee down the hallway, Greenlight clinging to his frame while Chromia and a freed Lancer ran behind him.

Shockwave pulled himself to his pedes. Flames licked his damaged armor and his optic locked onto the fleeing mechanisms.

He opened a comm line to a familiar number.

:: Desertion from the Decepticons is a crime punishable by offlining. I suggest you cherish the remaining moments of your miserable functioning while you can, as I *will* see your sentence carried out forthwith. ::

There was no response from the seeker but when Shockwave gave chase, relentless despite the damage to his frame, he caught the telling, nervous wobble of the jet's wings.

Blue hallways passed in a rush, turns and twists blending into the background of his consciousness as he followed, vision locked onto his targets. Blaster fire pelted him whenever the Autobots cared to shoot behind themselves and each hit that landed aggravated old Sharkticon-inflicted wounds along his legs and gun-arm, the welds tearing open and slowing his stride.

It was unwise to follow the Autobots blindly, as he was surely being led into a trap of some sort, but Shockwave no longer cared.

The hallway let out into a large underground cavern where old buildings supported the ceiling, their crumbling habsuite terraces lined the walls and a multitude of great tunnels were carved into their ancient structures like glitchmouse-holes, leading in many different directions away from the circular cavern. Regrouping, the Autobots and the *traitor* swung around to continue their united assault on Shockwave, another large femme that'd been waiting in the cavern –*Firestar*, he knew- joining their efforts.

The attack was overwhelming and had Shockwave not been privy to Blurr's memories, it would have been impossible to stand his ground. But Shockwave had seen much of Blurr's mind and had copies of his memories downloaded to his processor from their merges, and so he was in possession of stellar cycles worth of knowledge on the Autobots' training practices. He was aware of each of the femmes' weaknesses, strengths, and fighting styles. He knew *when* to strike and *which* attack to employ to ensure that he remained undefeated.

And as for Nacelle... Shockwave knew from personal experience that the seeker's servo-to-servo combat skills were abysmal, and he relied far too heavily on his missiles to win most skirmishes. Shockwave had made it a priority to catch one of the Seeker's wings in his servo and crush it early on into the renewed fight, disabling the seeker and forcing him to fight from the ground. His claws were irritating whenever they came close enough to scratch and slice Shockwave's purple plating, but the fear that shone in his red optics whenever he narrowly avoided punishing blows from Shockwave's fist was well worth the sting.

But no matter his advantages, the battle slowly turned in the Autobots' favor. An emptiness emanated from Shockwave's spark, weakening him as the fight wore on. He was only half a mech without the presence of his spark bond and after a particularly hard strike to the helm from Chromia, Shockwave stumbled- helm ringing, limbs growing heavy and cumbersome.

Dazed, he watched the pink ceiling, feeling detached from his frame and all the rage that had brought him to this point.

“Something's wrong with him- strike now! Now!” Nacelle’s voice wavered through the delirious haze in his processor. Many sets of small servos descended upon his frame, hitting him, hurting him, *tearing him apart*.

An old fear paralyzed him. Small servos touched his helm and he panicked; they were taking it, they had to be, they were going to take him apart and he couldn’t stop them. He could never stop them-

“Stop-” he rasped, pathetically, pushing weakly at the servos to make them leave. He... he was on the ground; his vision was corrupted. “Stop, please, do not-”

Clarity came like a wave over him, carrying away the fear and delusion that’d gripped him, invigorating his limbs and circuits with an endless energy. An awareness blossomed in the corner of his mind and spark once again, Blurr’s chattering presence making itself at home within his frame. Blurr felt confused and anxious, but was unharmed, a faint and whirling impression of his thoughts trickling over to Shockwave in bits of disordered code.

Had Shockwave the ability, he would have wept.

His optical light brightened to blinding levels as his vision restored itself, illuminating the faces of the confused femmes and seeker surrounding him. His spark swelled with energy and he transformed, struts and gears creaking and grinding in a horrible, painful sequence on the ground. It was inelegant and desperate but he aimed himself at random and *fired*.

The Autobots screamed, scrambling from the path of his shots. He cared not that the cavern trembled, the ancient buildings melting whenever they were hit by one of his blasts, old metal walls and columns bubbling as their forms were further deformed. Purple light flashed and the temperature of the cavern rocketed. The Autobots and Nacelle scurried from his assaults and tried to stop him with their weapons, but to no avail.

He would kill them all. Every last one of the miserable mechanisms that had wasted his time and kept him from finding his conjunx.

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait on this one!!!

A lot of the last chapter was inspired by the UK Marvel Transformers Issue #60 (Lots of pissed off Shockwave moments, I love his little menacing comments), and this chapter is heavily inspired by Beta and Blurr's scenes together in the G1 S3 episode "Forever is a Long Time Coming". I love how randomly shiny and well-drawn Blurr looks in one frame when he's talking to her lol

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Her tongue is moved by wit of high degree and ready repartee."

-Arabian Nights

[Earlier]

One moment Blurr had his pedes on the ground and the next he was *under* the ground.

Claustrophobia-inducing blue tunnel walls encapsulated him, narrowing his only choice of movement down to going either *forward-or-backward*, and something in his processor urged him forward, trancelike, to the end of the tunnel.

He was tired but he could not act on it. He was confused about how or why he was there, but he could not feel it. All that seemed to matter was getting to his goal. Wheelie and Haywire were oddly calm inside his frame, their EM fields pulsing to the same rhythm as the pink energon flowing through pipelines that spilled from the walls; woven into cracks and crevices and threaded through the floor. He trailed fingers across a wall while he walked. Damp rusty metal and plaster tingled through his sensory net.

A... purring noise -like the strained hum of broken machinery- registered through his audials.

He followed it in a daze, sensory crest pinging a spark signal ahead.

The source of the noise came from beyond a dilapidated doorway which he ran through with his usual lack of patience. A mistake. He entered the room in a rush and froze at the sight that met his optics, pedes skidding to a rough stop.

Gruesome was one way to describe it; a femme was stuck in the wall, the upper portion of her frame suspended from thin energon pipelines and tubes. Her lower half was missing from the waist down, exposing her inner machinery as her energon lines tumbled out and merged with the crumbling, ancient wall. Blurr cringed from the sight, but his legs carried him forward regardless, his own frame beyond his control.

When he was close enough to touch, the room seemed to grow brighter, the energon pipelines swelling for the barest klik. Then- the femme shuddered, rust-ridden green plating rolling in a wave when she flexed, fingers twitching in and out and shoulders rising.

“So, you have arrived.”

Her voice scratched like gravel and her helm raised to pin him with a blue stare.

Blurr blanched, regaining control over *most* of his frame. A cloud lingered in his processor, drifting through his wiring like he wasn't fully *alone* inside his frame. “What do you mean ‘*so-you-have-arrived*’ ? Arrived where? Where am I and where are we and who are *you* ? Did you bring me here but why-and-how-and-what-for-“

“-I am Beta.” The ancient femme cut into his rant, her voice a roiling purr of damaged vocal components. Her dusty optics scanned the room with disinterest before resettling on him. “And we are nowhere important.”

“Wh-”

“You have many questions. I understand. I will answer them, if you answer one for me.”

Blurr flailed his servos, temper rising. “That doesn't seem fair at all or make any sense why should I answer any of your questions when you're the one that-”

Beta pinned him with a look that silenced him immediately. Her field suffused the room; thin but potent, stern but carrying the gentleness of an old carrier. Her optics traveled over his faceplates with a sharpness that felt like she could see into his processor and watch the thoughts form inside his mind. Dropping her gaze, she studied the patch of discolored metal where his Autobrander used to sit.

“You have cast off the brand of slaves. Why?”

“*Slaves* -?” Blurr squawked. “What-do-you-mean-slaves-? I'm not a slave! Never-have-been-and-never-will-be-!”

Beta shook her helm and sighed, vents releasing long-trapped dust. “Our kind was once enslaved by the *Quintessons*. They branded us with the symbol you wore proudly. It was...

reclaimed by my partner, A1, for his cause. I do not care why you wore it, but tell me, why did you remove it?"

He blinked, raising a servo to touch the blank space on his chassis.

Something about the old femme's presence and demeanor compelled him to be truthful, so he opened his windshield and carefully pulled out a disgruntled Wheelie. His sparkling beeped at him, displeased, though he stayed calm at the feeling of both his carrier and the old femme's EM fields blanketed over him.

Blurr turned Wheelie so she could see his young faceplates. "Why would I wear a brand for a cause when I thought all that was left on Cybertron was me and my creations and my conjunx?" Blurr fidgeted, pedes anxiously shuffling side to side. "-And even though Shockwave's a Decepticon I-don't-want-to-fight-him and if I don't want to act like an Autobot and fight Decepticons then what good is my Autobrand?"

Beta scrutinized him, faceplates unreadable.

"And your conjunx? He still wears his brand?"

Blurr frowned. "He does but-but-but-" discomfort itched at his protoform, "He has his reasons but why are you interested in our brands anyway what-does-it-matter and why would Shockwave's Decepticon brand matter if he doesn't wear the Autobrand or slave-brand or-"

"-Both are a mark of rebellion, turned sour with time." she intoned, solemn. "What was once fought for with the intention of freedom and change has become an endless, devastating war, with both sides incapable of negotiating peace. We must discard factions to bridge the gap within our race. You understand this, that is why you have shed your brand."

Beta paused, and then softened; lips lifting into a gentle smile at Wheelie, her old faceplates creased with affection. "May I?"

She was oddly polite and Blurr found himself shuffling closer with Wheelie before he really thought about it. Her entire arm screamed when it moved, joints and gears scraping and creaking as she extracted her arm from a mess of wires to gently trace an ancient finger across Wheelie's soft cheek. The sparkling sneezed, vents puffing out dust while he stared at Beta with wide, curious optics.

She sighed, happily. "Thank you for allowing me such an honor. It has been countless millennia since I have seen a sparkling." Her gaze dropped briefly to his abdominal plates before she met his optics intensely. "You know they are the most *important* thing. Your spark is strong. It must be, to care for two newsparks, and it is strong enough to know when to change for them. That is why I called you here, and that is why I am entrusting you with what I have given my entire functioning to protect."

Beta's arm retracted and she leaned back into her bed of pipes and wires, chestplates splitting to reveal a very old spark; deep red and nearly cold as it spun a sluggish, sleepy dance within metal casing. Propped in front of her spark's rusted chamber was a golden key, untouched by time or decay.

Blurr stumbled a few steps away as a slew of forgotten data rushed to the fore of his processor. Like it had been lying in wait; waiting to be known again. His night fluxes- the repeating key in his dreams- *Moonracer*-!

“I separated from A1 after our rebellion against the Quintessons to hide the Key to Vector Sigma from those who would use it for domination.” Beta glanced around the room. “I was injured during a battle for the key and hid here. It is a perfect hiding place. It is nowhere; an area so utterly plain and unsuspecting that no mech thought to look here for me. But, with no aid and no ability to escape with my injuries, I risked rotting away...”

The tubes of energon around them pulsed when she closed her optics, as if she and their surroundings were in tune. “I merged with the frame of Primus to survive. So deep as we are here, we are close enough to hear His thoughts while He rests, to feel the pulses of His Allspark and the sparks of others within it.” Beta looked at him again. “I have been waiting for you. A friend of yours's spark called to me, from deep within the place where we all become One, and explained to me her plan. You see, even when physically separated from the Allspark, we all remain connected *here*.” She touched her own spark casing pointedly. “She has helped me call to you many times, and she has brought you here now. Did you hear her?”

The cloud that lingered in his processor slowly spread to the rest of his frame and coiled around his spark, soft and warm like a familiar embrace. Blurr tapped his chassis with jittery white fingers, understanding dawning. “I-did-I-did-I-did but I didn’t understand her at first but now I think I do.”

Beta nodded, pleased. “Take the key, Blurr.”

He approached on shock-numb legs; his fingers careful yet swift while dislodging the key from where it sat in her fragile chassis. Its smooth surface felt cold to the touch when he held it close. Wheelie grabbed it too- his tiny servos latching on with ridiculously strong sparkling-strength.

Beta’s chassis sealed shut with a final creak.

“This could cyberform Cybertron and make it healthy again right-right-right so we could restart and rebuild and everything could be brand new again right?”

“Yes. But be warned if you decide to take that path: I have chosen you –and *only* you- for a reason. The mind of Primus is not so lenient as I, and he is in great pain. Our creator wearies of conflict and is unlikely to yield to the demands of a member of either *faction* should they come forth with the request of reformation.”

Blurr canted his helm in confusion. “Why wouldn’t he want anyone to bring the key to him doesn't he want to be helped-fixed-restored-?”

“Not if the fighting continues.” Beta replied, dryly. “Now go, it would be best to reach Vector Sigma before you enter emergence, and I suspect the time for that draws nearer by the cycle. Your conjunx is undoubtedly on his way to this location as well- your friend was kind enough to leave him a *clue*.”

“But-what-about-you-!” Blurr let Wheelie hold the key like a toy so he could grip the femme’s shoulder pauldron. “I can’t leave you here not when you’ve been stuck here for so long you need to get out of here you need to leave!”

Beta smiled. Her servo creaked when she weakly placed it over his and patted it once. “I will leave, but not with you. Unfortunately, our paths will not cross again.” Her frame seemed to dim, green plating dulling.

“You’re-going-to- *offline*-?!” Blurr cried, frazzled. He couldn’t watch another femme die when he could help her. He’d left Moonracer, he didn’t want to leave Beta the same way. “But you-can’t-you-can’t-you-can’t do that you need to keep going you can’t offline here it’s not right what if we get you out of the wall so I can carry-”

“-All mechanisms die, Blurr.” Beta rasped, optics darkening. “And I am tired. For so long I have functioned in a state that has kept me close to becoming one with the Allspark, but always held back by my duty. Now that you have come, I am no longer trapped.” A smile bloomed across her lipplates, small and peaceful.

“Do not despair for what is lost; no mechanism is truly gone.” She murmured, her voice a serene purr. “We all become one.”

He watched while she greyed, color quietly seeping from her plating, light fading from her optics and thin biolights. Her grey servo fell from where it had been placed over his, and when the last spec of color vanished from her plating, the cloud-like trance that had brought him to Beta ebbed away completely. He gasped when he regained complete control of his frame and- and his *spark*!

It was agonizing-endless- *emptiness*; the place where Shockwave’s steady presence had occupied his spark was *gone*. He hadn’t noticed before, when *someone* else had temporarily occupied the space, but now the absence was glaring.

Blurr’s vents wheezed. ‘*Where-where-where-where is he where is-?*’

Then, like a snap, the bond reignited.

He barely had time to feel relieved before he was bombarded with Shockwave’s powerful emotions; pain and fear and terrible, unstoppable *rage*. He had never experienced anything like it. Something was wrong- something was very wrong and Blurr needed to find him, *fast*-

“Blurr?”

Whipping around in a panicked rush, Blurr turned and found none other than Alpha Trion behind him. The ancient mech lingered in the doorway, faceplates drawn in shock.

“*Alpha Trion*!-! You’re alive-you’re alive but how and how did you get here but- oh-! Am I glad to see you-!” Blurr virtually ran the mech over trying to reach him, vibrating with happiness and anxiety and all sorts of conflicting emotions. He did not know the ancient

mech well at all, but his presence was an unexpected comfort. Alpha Trion steadied him by gripping his upper arms.

“I believe that is what I should be asking *you*.” He looked down at Wheelie, and subsequently, at the state of Blurr’s frame. Joy and horror mixed in equal proportions in his old EM field. “What has happened, Blurr? We feared the worst for you. You are...” He trailed off carefully. “...Has Shockwave done this? Did he harm you, or force you to-”

“No-!” Blurr cried, flustered. “No-no-no-no that hasn’t happened but so many other things have happened that I need to tell you about but I don’t know where to start telling you but I can start by saying that Shockwave hasn’t-! That Shockwave- that he- oh! I’ll just say it: Shockwave is my *conjunx*.”

Alpha Trion gasped -it was more of an old wheezing sound from his vents than a gasp- and his optics went round. “Truly?”

Blurr nodded vigorously, hoping the information would dispel any worry about Shockwave *forcing* him. A sparkbond could only be created if both mechs were willing. A mech could not force one, or manipulate one, as a bot’s entire spark -their entire *being*- had to *want* the bond.

Alpha Trion seemed vaguely disturbed by the information, but he relaxed after a moment of contemplation. “Then I am glad. To see both you, Wheelie, and... and your newspark functioning. We had thought you were lost to us. You will have to recount your whole story when there is time to relay it.”

“Sure-sure-sure but Alpha Trion you keep saying ‘*we*’ but what do you mean by that who is ‘*we*’ who else are you talking about I don’t understand-”

“Your team,” Alpha Trion explained. “Chromia, Firestar, Lancer, and Greenlight still function.”

Blurr did not hear anything else after that. His processor *raced*.

“*They’re-alive-?!* ” It was too much all-at-once; Beta’s death-Shockwave’s rage-his team was *alive*-

“Yes,” Alpha Trion reiterated patiently. He steadied Blurr by wrapping an arm around his shoulder pauldrons when he swayed, though his frail gears creaked as they supported the weight of the carrying bot.

“But what about Elita One is Elita One functioning you didn’t say her designation I didn’t hear you say her designation-?”

“Elita One... is a more complicated matter. She sacrificed much to save your teammates from certain destruction and was gravely injured. There is a chance we may be able to repair her before her spark fades, and that chance is what has led us here in search of-”

“-The-key-to-Vector-Sigma-?” Alpha Trion blinked at him in surprise. Blurr thrust Wheelie forward, and the sparkling stared up at the old mech with the top of the large golden key in his intake, gnawing on it like a toy. “Oh Wheelie-Wheelie-Wheelie don’t chew on that it’s not sanitary-” Blurr muttered, tugging at the key.

Alpha Trion trembled, his free servo touched the key reverently, avoiding the end that Wheelie had in his intake. “Where did you find this?”

Blurr stilled, unsure how to explain for a moment, before he solemnly moved aside to allow Alpha Trion to see Beta’s frame.

“*Oh,*”

Tenderly, Alpha Trion approached the femme and placed a servo on her grey chassis. “I could not find you... for so long, I could not find you, my friend. I am too late.” He closed his optical shutters. Blurr held his vents, and silence filled the room.

When Alpha Trion opened his shutters, the room seemed to warm, the energon pipes’ pink glow rising when he dragged his servo away. “Till all are one.” He intoned, gently.

Turning, Alpha Trion looked ready to speak again but a tremor shook the ground and ceiling, rattling the energon tubes and causing dust and silt to fall. Blurr flinched, arms crossed over the front his chassis and Wheelie protectively until the tremor passed.

“Something is wrong something-is-very-wrong and we need to go-go-go now or things will get worse I can feel it-!” His blue optics were nearly white as the rage from Shockwave became unbearable. He didn’t know what was going on, but he knew he needed to find Shockwave immediately and so he didn’t wait for Alpha Trion to finish stammering his reply. He put Wheelie behind his windshield and hooked his arms around the elderly mech’s waist before dashing off, zipping blindly through a maze of tunnels, following the tightening of his spark’s bond as it neared its counterpart.

As he drew closer, faint echoes of sound reached his audials and grew into a louder din of battle, spurring on his panic. Alpha Trion was old and frail and lightweight in his arms, but it was a strain to carry him anyway, and when he darted into a huge underground cavern, he stumbled. The ancient mech was set down roughly before Blurr tumbled to the ground in a ball.

Blurr whimpered, arms curled around himself and his creations as blaster fire roared around him. Heat and smoke cloyed the air while Alpha Trion’s weathered servos patted his frame in search of injuries. He whined when his helm was prodded, antenna-crest twinging with pain. Something wet and hot ran down the back of his neck cabling.

“We...m... ret...reat... safet...y...now-” The ancient mech’s words floated to him brokenly, “He..lm...d...amag..e...”

“Alp-ha-Tr-io-n-?” Blurr stuttered in reply, hugging himself while his helm swiveled around to look for the mech.

With his optics narrowed in confusion, but far too dazed to do anything, Blurr felt himself be dragged out of the way of pelting blaster fire until he was hidden behind a large crumbling wall. When his processor cleared somewhat, he pulled himself into a sitting position with his back kibble to the wall for support. Alpha Trion fussed over his helm, doing something that was uncomfortable but helped his processor continue to regain traction.

“Alpha Trion! Where have you been? We need your help. He's too- *Blurr* ?”

Both of them turned when a femme stumbled behind the wall to join them, her plating was cracked and charred in places, but ultimately intact.

“Ch-r-om-ia-!” Blurr flung his arms wide open, and she dropped her blaster to wrap herself around him, strong arms lifting him from the ground to crush him close.

Underneath the tang of smoke and bitter energon, Blurr could smell her natural scent, and he buried his aching helm against her neck cables and went limp, letting her EM field envelop him. Crisp-and-warm-and-familiar; everything he had been missing for *quartexes*.

Chromia's chassis shook, plating rattling when she sobbed. Her rough-textured servo cupped the back of his helm and pulled him away from her shoulder so that she could look at his face. They mirrored one another; tired white faces and blue armor streaked with pink. “We thought you were dead.”

“I thought you were offline too! I looked but you weren't there-!”

“Woah,” Chromia chuckled wetly, engine rumbling. “Slow down there, speedball.”

Still disoriented, Blurr tried to slow his glossa but it wouldn't cooperate. Instead, he clumsily pried Wheelie from his chassis to show Chromia, grinning when she put more space between them to get a better look. Her face was shocked, and her servo raised to touch Wheelie's helm hesitantly, like he might not be real.

Wheelie wasn't in the best shape. But even though he was shaken and frightened from the rough ride, he *shrieked* in delight when he recognized Chromia. One of his tiny servos got hooked on the side of her helm and he used it to mash their faces together.

When Chromia finally pried herself free from his grasp, it was with a giddy smile that almost looked manic on her battle-worn faceplates.

“Blurr, I am so-” She stopped.

Her optics fell on the rest of his frame. Blurr couldn't explain- his words became a jumble of sound far too fast for her audials when he tried to talk. He attempted to grab her arms, but her face had gone blank, her smile draining until all that was left was a disturbingly empty look.

“*Shockwave*.” She hissed, and tore herself from Blurr to retrieve her blaster, fingers curled achingly tight around it.

“I will stop him.” She looked down at them. Firelight from the battle outside their safe spot illuminated her from behind and lit her optics with an intense glow. “*I will*.”

“Chromia, please wait, it is not-” Alpha Trion tried to reason while Blurr begged unintelligibly, but their voices fell of deaf audials. She ran from them- rejoining the battle with renewed passion.

“IhavetostopthemthisisallwrongandIneedtogosoyouholdWheelie-!”

“Blurr, you cannot go out there. It is not safe for you nor your-”

“AlphaTrionIhavetodoitortheywon’tstop-!” Blurr protested, brushing the old mechs servos from his frame. He thrust Wheelie into Alpha Trion’s arms to distract him before he stumbled his way from the hiding spot.

It was *chaos*. The fevered, frenzied heat and violence of a horrible, painful battle that refused to end. At the center of it all was Shockwave, and when Blurr spotted him, he was abruptly reminded of how *terrifying* the Decepticon was. Warframes were simply different from them, and nothing had ever made that more obvious to Blurr than in that moment. Blaster fire that would have torn straight through Blurr’s armor merely singed Shockwave and annoyed him. Punches that would have crumpled Blurr’s plating seemed to glance off him like oil. Shockwave stood against five opponents and held his ground with only a little difficulty...

...and he hurt Blurr’s teammates with very minimal effort.

A whine came from above and Blurr stopped, fear at the sound of a jet engine circling the top of the cavern holding him still. He forced himself to look and spotted Shockwave’s red seeker attacking-

-attacking Shockwave?

Blurr watched in disbelief as the seeker released a powerful volley of shots at his fellow Decepticon. Most of his shots missed, as one of his wings was crumpled, causing him to wobble and drift unsteadily in the air. His panic grew when the seeker looped around to approach Shockwave from behind while he was distracted by Firestar and Chromia, missiles activating with a nauseating flash of his biolights.

The seeker couldn’t miss with those, Blurr realized. They had tracking tech built in- they’d hit Shockwave no matter how off the seeker’s initial aim was. Blurr didn’t think. He didn’t think or plan or do anything at all except *run* straight at his conjunx.

The missile fired. Blurr’s arms stretched out. Shockwave’s helm turned and his yellow optic flared with recognition through his rage.

“NonononononoShockwave *MOVE-!*” His light frame collided into Shockwave’s broad chest, futilely pushing for a fraction of a micro-second before Shockwave wrapped his arms around him, and the missile hit.

hehe :3

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Oppress no one, lest fortune oppress you.”

-Arabian Nights

There was a rush of movement, partially obscured by smoke and light, and then Blurr found himself sprawled on the ground, safe and shielded beneath Shockwave’s shuddering frame. His conjunx was propped on his knees and elbow-joints, yellow optic flickering while the stench of fried wiring and melted armor wafted over them.

“Blurr!” Shockwave gasped, helm clumsily lowering to bump forehelms with his conjunx.

He groaned. Pain overwhelmed their bond, causing Blurr to writhe with discomfort and worry, servos skittering over Shockwave’s battered frame in search of injuries.

“Why?” Shockwave’s optic stared at him, consuming Blurr’s vision. His rasping voice sizzled and popped with static. “Why did you lea-”

A green servo wormed its way around Shockwave’s shoulder pauldron, invading the pocket of privacy beneath his frame where Blurr lay.

“Get off him!”

More colorful servos appeared and pried at Shockwave’s armor, and he shrunk further over Blurr’s frame. Over the bond all that came from Shockwave was a mechanimal-like need to escape. To *hide*. His melted armor cinched tight on his frame and his optic shone with cold fear.

“Stopstopstopstopstop!” Blurr slapped at the servos and kicked his legs out around Shockwave’s frame, pushing his teammates back.

“Blurr! Are you okay? Wait and we’ll-”

“Nowe’re fine just backup backup backup!”

“Huh?”

“What’d he say?”

An unfamiliar mech’s voice cut in. “Who cares what the racer said! Pull him out so we can finish-”

“You cannot! Stop what you are doing at once and back away, all of you.” Blurr sagged in relief when Alpha Trion’s commanding voice appeared.

Shockwave curled tighter around Blurr and their creation, so stiff that it felt like his struts would snap. Blurr still couldn't quite get his processor and frame to connect right, and so his servos stroked over Shockwave’s waist and chassis too roughly and quickly while trying to comfort him.

“ShockwaveShockwaveShockwave,” More touches, and the scientist seemed to calm. “We’re fine you can stand up we’re not going to get hurt now-”

There were voices arguing and murmuring from beyond Shockwave’s frame, but it all was a jumble of nonsense to his disinterested audials; all he cared about was making sure Shockwave was okay.

Groaning, Shockwave slumped to the side and propped himself against a nearby chunk of rubble. Blurr scrambled to cover Shockwave with his smaller frame once he was freed, reversing their positions to hurriedly examine him. Shockwave seemed functional overall, but much of his back plating and kibble was melted, which would inhibit his ability to transform. Relief flooded through Blurr when he realized none of the damage was lethal. He cradled Shockwave’s helm between his servos and peppered kisses along every micrometer he could reach, smiling when Shockwave’s finials waggled clumsily in response.

“Oh, gross.” That sounded like Firestar. Blurr rolled his optical lights.

“I did not need to see that.”

“Ditto.”

“Can we kill him now? I don’t want to be subjected to any more of... *this*.” Both Blurr and Shockwave tensed at the last voice. The *seeker*.

Shockwave wrapped a protective arm around Blurr and struggled to sit more upright, his mangled gun-arm raised in silent threat. Blurr frowned. Shockwave was either very out of it and could not remember that his gun-arm no longer had a power core, or he was purposefully bluffing. He hoped it wasn’t the first one.

“Control yourselves.” Chided Alpha Trion, and Blurr let some of his tension seep away, turning in Shockwave’s hold to finally look at his team.

Despite the situation, Blurr smiled. The femmes collectively relaxed, their optics glued to their courier’s faceplates.

“Blurr!” Lancer gasped; servos clasped to her chassis in relief. She looked like she wanted to approach, her optics gleaming with barely contained emotion, but Shockwave’s massive presence discouraged any of them from coming closer.

Blurr had *missed* her.

“LancerLancerLancerit’ssogoodtoseeyouImissedyousosomuchbutinorderformetocomeclose
ryouneedtoputyourblastersaway-”

“Uh?” Lancer looked deeply apologetic and awkward. “I’m sorry Blurr, but could you repeat that? I think that was too fast...”

The rest of the femmes and the seeker mumbled in agreement.

Blurr pursed his lipplates and cycled his vents, focusing intensely. His processor felt disconnected from his frame, unable to slow itself as it usually could. It hurt. “C-c-c-o-o-o-u-u-u-l-l-l-d-d-d-y-y-y-o-o-o-”

“-He asks you to lower your weapons, you insufferable glitches.” Shockwave griped, rubbing his helm as he seemed to come out of whatever fear-induced haze he’d been trapped in.

“Hey-!”

“Who’s he calling-”

“Shut your traps, all of you!” Chromia snapped, glaring at the bots around her. She gave a heavy, begrudging sigh, and then placed her blaster on the ground. She stared at the others pointedly. “We can’t kill him. If what Alpha Trion says is true, then killing Shockwave could offline Blurr.”

“Is it true Blurr?” Greenlight asked, her faceplates nearly grey with distress. “Are you conjunxed to Shockwave?”

Blurr nodded.

The group erupted, shouting and arguing and spewing threats at Shockwave.

A wail cut through the racket and Blurr snapped to attention, zeroing in on Wheelie in Alpha Trion’s arms. He wrangled himself out of Shockwave’s hold to stumble to his sparkling, who Alpha Trion passed over gently. The outcry from the group grew louder when Blurr’s condition became apparent to all of them- he didn’t exactly possess a *lithe* figure at-the-moment.

“How could you?!” Firestar cried, accusing optics narrowed at Shockwave.

Even though his teammates’ ire was directed at Shockwave, Blurr felt shame flush through him. He’d betrayed his team; he’d given up on them, and he’d willingly given Shockwave Autobot secrets. Sudden panic and anxiety bubbled in his spark, and he wobbled on his knee joints, optics bouncing between each of the femme’s angry faces.

Shockwave felt Blurr's distress across their bond, and he forced himself to stand.

The femmes scrambled backwards, postures clicking into defensive positions around Blurr and Alpha Trion automatically.

"Cease your theatrics. Do you not see how your behavior is affecting your *teammate*?" Shockwave rasped, mocking. "Or do you now consider him a traitor?"

Chromia bristled. "*Never*."

Lancer stood beside Blurr, her broad presence was both comforting and anxiety inducing. She very carefully set her servo on his trembling arm and looked down at him with serious optics. "You're one of us, Blurr. No matter what."

Some of Blurr's nervous fear ebbed away. Wheelie buried his helm into Blurr's neck cables and whined.

"Yeah," Firestar chimed in. "And we'll protect you, especially against *him*."

"You don't need to protect me against-"

"Your protection is unneeded." Shockwave hissed, far from his usual composed and logical self. "Blurr is my conjunx, it would be nonsensical for me to harm him in any way." After a pause to calm himself, he lowered his gun-arm, most likely realizing the logic in defusing the situation. "Step away from him. My actions have all been made under the assumption that he was harmed, or taken, by your team. Now that I am assured of his continued functioning, I do not currently intend to resume our previous altercation."

Chromia scoffed. "'*Altercation*' is a fancy way of wording how you tried to crush us into sheet metal, Shockwave. I don't buy it. You're conjunxed, how could you not sense if he was functional?"

"That." Shockwave pinned Blurr with an intense look. "Is what I would like to know as well."

All optics turned to the courier, and he twitched nervously.

"I think this conversation would be best be had in a more structurally secure location." Alpha Trion drawled; spindly finger pointed toward the ominously cracked cavern ceiling. "We are the last of our species remaining on this planet. I am sure we can agree to a ceasefire, for the moment."

"But-" Greenlight snapped her intake shut at the sharp looks she got from Chromia and Alpha Trion.

"Despite my reservations about *our* safety in his presence, it is clear Shockwave would not harm his conjunx. We needn't separate them now." Alpha Trion appraised Shockwave, and Shockwave opticked him just a closely. The older mech stepped away from the group and let his arm sweep out, like a polite host, indicating that they should follow him to one of the undamaged tunnels. "Well?"

The femmes and lone seeker shuffled on their pedes, gazes jumping between both Alpha Trion and Shockwave, who both stood still. The atmosphere of the cavern was thick enough to touch. Shockwave slowly inclined his helm toward Blurr while his optic stayed fixed on Alpha Trion's faceplates. His message was clear:

Give me Blurr first.

Chromia turned to Blurr, a question in her optics. Blurr nodded to her quickly.

"Alright. Let's go." Chromia sighed with a deep frown and stepped out of formation. The rest of the femmes hesitantly broke off and cleared the way for Blurr to reach Shockwave. They scurried after Alpha Trion, waiting at the entrance of the tunnel for Blurr and the Decepticon to follow.

A stretch of crumbled, scorched ground separated Blurr from his conjunx, and Shockwave held out his servo for him to take, silently beckoning. Blurr knew he could cross the distance in klicks, but he hesitated. Seeing his teammates functioning and accepting of him, and being surrounded by their comforting EM fields, had made him realize that he didn't want to lose them again.

He didn't know if Shockwave intended to follow the femmes. All he felt from his counterpart was a suspiciously neutral thrum of emotion that was difficult to read.

"WearegoingtogoafterthemShockwavearen'twearen'twearen'twe?
Wehavetofollowthemandpleasepleasepleasedon'thurttheyouknowwhattheymeantomeIknow
youdo-!"

:: I neither trust them nor desire to tolerate their presence. :: Shockwave commed. He rolled his shoulders frustratedly, and the melted gears within them creaked. :: But I acknowledge the fact that we require aid, and that it would be unwise to exterminate the last remaining Cybertronians on this planet aside from ourselves. I... can see your regard for them, as well. We will follow. ::

Blurr flung himself at the warframe, pressing his cheek to his broad chassis with relief, thin arms attempting to wrap around the entirety of Shockwave's waist and failing. Wheelie burbled quietly from where he'd quickly been placed on top of Decepticon's chassis, nuzzling his helm into his adopted creator's neck cabling.

"Your energy is depleted." Shockwave's arm wrapped around his shoulder pauldrons. "Rest. Allow me to carry you."

"Carryme?!Isyourprocessormalfunctioningyou'vesustainedtoomuchdamagetocarrymeShock
waveyoughitwithamissile-!"

"Surface damage." Shockwave dismissed, hefting Blurr into his arms with several loud groans from his struts. "Nacelle fired three missiles on my frame during our altercation, the last of which you witnessed was insignificant. I am fine."

Blurr squinted at him dubiously but couldn't contain the blissful sigh that escaped his vents when the pressure of standing was eliminated. His pedes *ached*.

Haywire was fine despite the rough ride from the past few joors. It kicked at Blurr relentlessly now, and its tiny EM field flickered groggily. Shockwave's CNA must have been particularly influential because the sparkling's frame during the last few deca-cycles of carriage had grown dense and so-so-so heavy.

It was definitely a warframe.

It made him tired, too. Even the easiest of runs had him swaying in place, and the running he'd been doing the past few joors could not be described as '*easy*'. His vision swam with pixelated swirls of color while his helm rolled back, supported by Shockwave's massive arm.

"Come, there is a smaller adjoining cavern nearby." Alpha Trion's voice echoed in his audials, fading in and out with the rhythm of Shockwave's heavy steps. A lighter patter from the femmes joined the sound, the echoes of their familiar gaits washing over him comfortingly.

Blurr hadn't realized he'd drifted into a half-recharge until he was gently placed on a large slab of metal and surrounded by mecha. Alpha Trion, Shockwave, and Firestar all seemed to be bickering over who could fix his frame first.

"I have been through basic medic training under CMO Ratchet; I know what I'm doing!" Firestar argued, plating visibly flared while she glowered at Shockwave.

"Your meagre medical training is not enough for this situation. I have been dissecting mecha since before your base code formed. My extensive expertise and knowledge concerning cyberbiology is far more appropriate for repair-"

"I-think-Alpha-Trion-is-already-on-it-Shockwave-Shockwave." Blurr snickered sleepily. The ancient mech gave an amused huff from his vents while he plucked at exposed wires on the back of Blurr's helm. Whatever he was fixing was helping Blurr regain control of his vocalizer speed.

Shockwave's optic latched onto the spot where Alpha Trion's fingers brushed Blurr's helm. Cold jealousy filtered through their bond. Well- Blurr was fairly certain it was jealousy, but it was hard to tell, considering how *Shockwave* wasn't even sure of what emotions he was experiencing most of the time.

Blurr kicked him in the shin-plate. :: Gross-gross-gross-Shockwave-he's-practically-probably-definitely-eighty-trillion-cycles-old-! ::

The Decepticon said nothing in reply. He crossed his arms -with Wheelie tucked into the crook- and looked off to the side, feigning interest in surveying the femmes nearby while he gently bounced their sparkling. With his helm tilted down, so that his optic appeared to be a half-circle of yellow peering out from under the rim of his helm plating, he looked sullen-moody-*morose*.

Blurr snickered again at the observation.

“Since Alpha Trion is working on your helm, can I scan you to check your overall health, Blurr? I do have a little knowledge and training on carriage... I could make sure everything is progressing right?” Firestar offered her arm and bared the hardline array cover on her wrist. She had a basic medical connector installed, so the offer wasn’t inappropriate. She’d only be able check his systems through a clinical connection.

Shockwave bristled but Blurr beat him to the punch. “Sure-sure-sure-go-ahead-and-check-” he trusted her, so he offered his wrist, and she plugged in.

It was quick and painless. Just a strange pressure drifting through his systems for less than a klik.

“Hmm.” Firestar looked worried when she disconnected.

“What-is-it-Firestar-? What’s wrong is something wrong is something-”

“Woah! I can understand you a bit better now. No, no, it’s fine Blurr. I’m sorry, everything looks great. Actually... your sparkling seems to be doing perfectly fine. No issues with frame development...” She side-opticked Shockwave.

The Decepticon’s EM field reeked of satisfaction. “Naturally.”

She rolled her optics. “But I’m concerned about how close you are to emergence... it’s only a few cycles away, and this isn’t exactly the best area to be for... *that*.”

Blurr’s fingers tapped a nervous rhythm against the slab of metal while he processed her words. “I think I can explain all-of-it everything that’s happened now I think Alpha Trion’s done enough I’m-ready-to-talk-now-”

“Are you certain, Blurr?” Alpha Trion questioned. The racer nodded a quick yes.

The other femmes and the seeker were beckoned over by Firestar, and Blurr felt off kilter having so many optics on him at once. The only mechanisms he’d seen for quartexes had been Shockwave, Wheelie, and to a smaller extent, Wreck-Gar. It was overwhelming.

Uncertain of where to begin, he decided to start from the very beginning.

Blurr covered everything. Moonracer and the black painted seeker, the destruction of their base, his time alone, the Alpha Trion files, and his confinement in Shockwave’s tower. The last one got several deadly glares thrown at Shockwave, and he hurried to continue explaining, carefully detailing the circumstances behind Haywire’s creation. It-did-not-sound-good, but he pushed on anyway, explaining the time they’d spent together in Iacon after he’d been released from the tower, and their eventual abduction by the Quintessons.

“Iacon is destroyed- there is nothing left of it now. I assume this is *your* fault, Shockwave?” The red seeker cut in.

Shockwave looked down at him, disdain apparent. “Indeed. It was an unfortunate consequence of my destruction of the Quintesson command ship. The ship’s massive size contributed to it being pulled down to the surface by Cybertron’s gravity when I shot it from the outer portion of our atmosphere. I could not control its trajectory, and it seems its impact has been devastating.”

“Unfortunate.” Alpha Trion sighed. “But it is better than the alternative. I understand that it was imperative to destroy the Quintessons before their hold on Cybertron became unshakeable. Though I wonder, how is it you two were able to make it to the surface unscathed? And how did you know where to find Beta?”

“Beta?” Shockwave’s finials swiveled, confused.

“We escaped in one of the Quintesson emergency pods and it took so-so-so long but when we landed something happened-” Blurr struggled to find words to describe what he’d felt. “I don’t know how to explain but something -some *bot*- took control of my spark-processor-frame and told me where to go and took me all the way here without stopping until I found Beta and she gave me this-”

“*What*-” Shockwave’s optic flared with outrage which was quickly doused when he saw what Blurr pulled out of his subspace.

“*The key to Vector Sigma*.” The scientist’s vocalizer was faint, in awe.

“I know what you mean!” Lancer burst. “I had a dream where a bot showed me how to get here too. In my dream it was-”

“-Moonracer.” Blurr finished. He shivered and touched his chassis, just over his spark. “Beta-said-she-was-able-to-connect-with-us-through-our-sparks-”

“Our bond.” Shockwave hissed. Through the data filtering over their sparkbond, Blurr could feel the Decepticon’s intelligent processor jumping to connect the dots. “I would not think such a feat possible, but the Allspark is the well within which all sparks are stored, and through which we all share a tangible, observable connection. Though it is faint, and naturally dormant. It seems her spark was able to transmit a signal and form a connection to Blurr’s spark, but the connection overpowered our conjunx bond.”

Shockwave’s distress and anger grew. “I could not feel you. You were gone and I pursued for joors. I had thought you’d-” He cut himself off, remembering that he was surrounded by his enemies.

The red seeker stared at him as if he’d grown a second helm.

“Look how *soft* you’ve become, Shockwave.” The seeker mocked; wings flared and clawed fingers flexing like he wanted to tear into the larger mech. “What happened to your intolerance of emotion? I thought you were able to overcome something as insignificant as *affection*.”

“Silence yourself, traitor.” Shockwave’s EM field turned colder. “I could snuff your spark at any moment as retribution for your betrayal. That I have not done so already is testament to my patience. Do not test it further.”

The seeker ripped off his Decepticon badge and threw it at Shockwave’s pedes, gaze defiant and enraged. “I’m not a traitor.” He spat, and pointed at the Autobots with disgust. “Because I’m not an Autobot or a neutral. Because there *are no factions* to defect from anymore. There is no war- there are no armies. It’s only us. All of us. Don’t you see it?”

“Irrelevant nonsense.” Shockwave’s finials pinned to his helm. “It is not only us. The war is not gone. Lord Megatron will return and... and he...” He hesitated, staring at Wheelie in his arms before raising his helm to Blurr.

Blue optics bore into him.

“He’ll do what, Shockwave?” Chromia asked.

The Decepticon was silent for a breem. He stroked a finger over the curve of Wheelie’s cheek, finials twitching when the sparkling’s engine emitted a content purr. “He... will most assuredly order the immediate destruction of all remaining Autobots on Cybertron, and send reinforcements to ensure his will is carried out.”

Blurr was oddly still. Simply watching-watching-watching the scene unfold. His vents held in his frame, teetering on the edge of release.

“Would that be a logical course of action for you to take? To follow his order and destroy your conjunx and creations, and eradicate the last of the femmes your conjunx holds dear?” Alpha Trion questioned; his ancient EM field full of creeping curiosity while he watched the Decepticon battle with himself. “Do you wish for that to happen?”

Shockwave broke. His frame shuddered violently, rattling his deformed, melted armor. “I do not.”

All the air held in Blurr’s vents left in a relieved *whoosh*.

“Your argument is sound...” Shockwave’s broad shoulders slumped in a rare show of humility. “I can see my error.”

Pride rippled through Blurr’s spark that he couldn’t contain. He’d seen Shockwave’s memories; he knew how important Megatron was to him. Megatron had given Shockwave a purpose after he had lost everything. The fact that he would abandon his loyalty to the warlord proved how deeply he cared for Blurr and their creations.

“Yeah, this is spark-warming and all,” Chromia grunted. She did not sound spark-warmed. “But what I want to know is why Moonracer contacted both Lancer and Blurr when only one of them was needed to get the key. Do you think she wanted to get us to meet?”

“I-think-so but that isn’t all of it I think that most importantly she wanted all of us to get the key because we can use it to cyberform Cybertron and make it new-whole-restored again

and-”

“Wait a klik- *cyberform* Cybertron? With a key? Did my audial receptors pick that up right?” The red seeker asked.

“Yes.” Alpha Trion stroked the facial adornment on his chin thoughtfully. “Though it has not been done in many millennia. I heard myths of Vector Sigma’s abilities during my enslavement under the Quintessons, and of a mysterious process by which the Quintessons were capable of rejuvenating our world.”

“They-used-stars-as-fuel-!” Blurr explained, his servos a flurry of motion while he spoke. “We discovered that on the Quintesson ship- the key activates Vector Sigma and then we direct it to absorb energy from a nearby star and then the whole planet gets reformed.”

“Hadeen would be an adequate source of fuel. It is close enough.” Shockwave mused.

“This is perfect.” Chromia breathed, optics latched on to the key with a wild hope. “Almost too perfect. Elita One can be restored, and the planet can be fixed; what’s the catch, Blurr?”

The courier fidgeted, his free servo tapping the place on his chassis where his Autobrand used to sit.

“Beta gave me the key because the-planet-Primus is hurt and tired and reluctant to let us cyberform him if we continue our war and I-I-I-” He met the red seeker’s gaze reluctantly. He *hated* the seeker, but- “I-agree-with-you it’s just us on Cybertron now and there’s no point in us fighting when I don’t want to lose any-of-you-!”

The seeker gawked, red wings fluttering. It was obvious he wasn’t expecting Blurr to agree with him. The rest of the femmes shifted uneasily.

“So, this whole ‘re-cyberforming the planet’ plan will only work if we give up our war and... get along?” Chromia asked, straight to the point.

“Yes-yes-yes that’s it essentially I-just-said-that-didn’t-I-?” Blurr was growing tired and snappy. Haywire kept kicking him and his injuries and self-repair protocols were pinging him incessantly, begging him to recharge. “I-know-I-can-do-it I *know* I can take the key to Vector Sigma and ask it but all this depends on you-all-too and if you can stop fighting so we can do this then it will work I know it.”

An uncomfortable silence reigned. The Autobots, Seeker, and Decepticon stood motionless, hyper-aware of one another but unwilling to speak.

Alpha Trion patted Blurr on the shoulder pauldron. “We needn’t decide everything at once. A simple temporary truce should suffice for now? Our main goal should be the reformation of Cybertron, so that we all may have a chance at functioning on a healthy home planet. I am certain we can all agree to work together on that.”

Shockwave inclined his helm. “That is a logical course of action; the successful restoration of Cybertron is paramount to our war. I agree to your temporary truce.”

Chromia silently met the optics of each of the femmes in her team before she nodded briskly. “We agree to the truce.”

The seeker shrugged his wings. “I’m not going to say no to fixing the planet, even if I hate most of you.”

Blurr sagged with relief, one servo rubbing his aching midsection while his optical shutters blinked tiredly.

Alpha Trion clasped his spindly servos together, pleased. “Excellent. Our current position near Vos makes it difficult to navigate toward the planet’s core, where Vector Sigma lies, but we are already quite deep beneath the surface. I can lead the way to the core, and we should arrive within a few cycles. However, our first course of action before we begin our journey, should be to *rest*.”

“What?” Lancer scratched the back of her helm, confused. Firestar, Greenlight, and the seeker looked similarly bewildered. “Shouldn’t we leave now?”

“Alpha Trion...” Chromia growled, hands on her hips. “We don’t have time to waste recharging. Elita-”

“Your leader is correct.” Shockwave interrupted, earning himself the full force of Chromia’s glare.

“*Leader*’ ...” She muttered, irritated, before she continued: “There’s no point in waiting around. I thought you of all mechs would see the logic in getting to the core as soon as possible, Shockwave.”

“And I would think that you would see the value in allotting time for your *teammate* to rest. Carriage is not an insignificant strain on a civilian frame.” Shockwave countered, gesturing to Blurr, who was visibly fighting off recharge.

The courier couldn’t care less what they were saying. His vision grew darker by the klik, and all he wanted was for Shockwave to stop-talking-so-much-like-he-always-did-and-*hold-him*.

Chromia flustered at the reminder of Blurr’s condition, looking genuinely thrown as if she’d forgotten how affected the courier was.

“There are you and your teammates’ injuries to consider as well, Chromia.” Alpha Trion added gently. “You are all quite damaged. Please, rest and heal while you can. We will get Elita One to Vector Sigma in due time.”

“I- you’re right, Alpha Trion. We’ll rest for five joors- but then we have to leave. I don’t want to risk waiting any longer.”

Alpha Trion dipped his helm. “Very well.”

“Where is Elita One?” Shockwave questioned, suddenly, his helm turning to scan the cavern like a turbofox on the hunt. The femmes collectively stiffened.

“Stored nearby.” Chromia grunted, unwilling to elaborate.

“Stored? From that description, I gather she is non-functional. I am curious as to how she became so gravely injured as to need intervention from Vector Sigma.” Shockwave pressed. “Additionally, I believe it is only logical that you recount your movements over the past solar cycle, as Blurr has done for you.”

“The-power-line-explosion-!” Blurr blurted, struggling to stay focused on the conversation. “It destroyed the energon warehouse I-saw-it-I-saw-it-I-saw-it afterward it was *gone*.”

“Elita saved us.” Firestar spoke when Chromia seemed reluctant. “She had some sort of... ability to slow things down? Alpha Trion could explain it better—he built her- but she used it to get us out of the blast radius. It used most of her spark energy though, and the way she was built makes it impossible for any of us to jumpstart her spark regeneration.”

“She’s hidden behind that boulder.” Lancer timidly pointed behind herself. “We’re hoping Vector Sigma can help her.”

“We *know* Vector Sigma can help her.” Chromia corrected, firmly. “Isn’t that right, Alpha Trion?”

“It is.” Alpha Trion opticked Shockwave warily when he turned his attention to him.

“Elita One is your creation?” Curiosity tumbled across the sparkbond.

“She is. I re-built her with my own servos, forging her into the mechanism she is now.”

Shockwave’s finials ticked back and forth in thought. “Your decision to imbed temporal technology within a Cybertronian frame is intriguing. I had not thought it to be compatible with standard civilian frames’ minimal electrical energy output. I assume the spark-drain was your workaround for that issue?”

“Indeed.” The ancient mech seemed to brighten, pleased with the chance to talk to a mech who shared his knowledge and interest in cyberbiology. Then, he deflated, a somber note entering his EM field. “But it was a mistake. A fatal one. Though Elita One has used her ability to save others, I cannot help but regret giving it to her in the first place. I should not have tampered with my creation so irresponsibly.”

Shockwave froze. His servo hovered where it had been poised to cup the back of Wheelie’s helm affectionately. He didn’t seem to have a response available and fell into a moment of contemplation.

The femmes and seeker had lost interest in the conversation and had already begun inspecting one another’s injuries.

“Alpha Trion? Could you help me look at this?” Firestar called politely from where she sat, examining Greenlight’s damaged chassis.

“Of course.” Alpha Trion gave Shockwave and Blurr a terse yet polite nod before he left to rejoin the others.

Shockwave offered his arms out to Blurr.

'Finallyfinallyfinallyfinally-' Blurr slumped halfway off his metal slab and into the embrace. He had too-too-too much to think about and not enough energy to think it.

All he wanted was to rest with his creations and conjunx nearby, and as soon as he was safely supported in Shockwave's embrace, he was out like a light.

Chapter End Notes

Tbh I reeeeaalllly like the marvel comics because shockwave is soooo stubborn, but the moment someone explains/argues something in a way he can't refute, he folds so fast. he's so cute

also apologies for any grammar/spelling issues with this one! i'm too tired to try and edit anymore lol

1/11/24 EDIT: I am still working on this! I've got the last chapters planned and partially written. I'm just being picky about how it ends lol. Thank you to everyone who's commented and left kudos, it keeps me going for sure!

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

Recap of how tf sparks work in this fic, since they're kind of based on the lifecycle of stars:

Small, White, and very hot = Newborn or youngling

Medium sized, Blue, and hot = Mature adult (human equivalent to 20-30 yrs old)

Medium/Large, Orange, and warm = Middle aged

Large, Red, and cool = Very old

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Sharing an orbit with God is no small experience.”

-Star Trek

“I dunno. It looks weird to me, that’s all.” Lancer shifted uncomfortably. “Doesn’t seem safe.”

“Does he actually... *like* doing that?” Firestar’s nasal ridge crinkled.

Blurr squinted at them while he guzzled his third cube of energon since waking from recharge. “Like-doing-what-exactly?” he asked, once his intake was clear.

“That.” Greenlight pointed at something behind him.

Turning, Blurr spotted what had the three femmes so ruffled.

Shockwave sat a good distance away on a chunk of rubble with Wheelie in his lap. He was carefully feeding the sparkling tiny sips of energon from one of his rationed cubes, taking a pause every few klicks to ensure Wheelie didn’t over fill his tank.

Blurr felt his spark flutter at the sight. He looked at the femmes with one brow ridge arched. “Well obviously he likes doing it because if he didn’t like doing it he obviously wouldn’t do it.”

“So, he can *like* things. Does that mean he has feelings? I thought he was emotionless...” Firestar wondered, and the rest of the femmes nodded in curious agreement.

On one servo, Blurr could understand their confusion and concern, but on the other... “Of course he has emotions he’s a bot like you or I am and he’s perfectly safe for Wheelie to be around in-fact I think he’s safer with Shockwave than anywhere else-!”

The femmes blinked in surprise at his protective outburst.

“Woah.” Lancer gawked at him. “You’re really serious about all this.”

Greenlight jabbed her elbow-articulator into the taller femme’s side with a look that said, ‘*Please shut up*’.

Blurr straightened his posture.

Firestar groaned. “Good going Lancer, he’s getting all huffy now. You know he’s going to-”

“-Considering how I’m conjunxed to him and currently sparked then yes I would say that I’m more-than-serious and since I love him and our sparks are permanently tied together then I can confirm that he does feel feelings and despite his not-so-perfect history he is a good creator and he considers Wheelie as his own creation and not only because he thinks it’s logical to-do-so but also because he loves him and so I trust him and I would prefer it if you all would consider my situation just-as-seriously-!”

“*Love* ?” Greenlight echoed, as if that was all she’d heard from his verbal spew. The femmes collectively cringed.

“Wait.” Firestar looked like a horrible epiphany had struck her. “I don’t blame you for having to depend on Shockwave for assistance with your spark condition, but I can’t help but wonder... does this mean you’ve actually... *wanted* to interface with Shockwave? Not just to survive spark overcharge?”

Blurr gave her a look in response.

“What’s that face mean? Blurr? Why are you looking at us like that?” Greenlight frowned.

“Oh Primus, I’m gonna be sick. Why’d you put that image in my processor, Firestar?” Lancer covered her optics.

Firestar cringed. “Okay, we get it, Blurr. You don’t need to look so... so *smug* about it-”

“Smug about fragging Shockwave?” Greenlight snorted derisively. “Why? He’s about as appealing as Alpha Trion’s skid plates.”

“I don’t know... maybe there’s some appeal?” Firestar tapped a thoughtful finger on her chin guard. “Shockwave *is* very big...” The femmes collectively peered at Shockwave again. Blurr rolled his optical lights and continued fueling himself while they bickered.

“Nope. Still ugly. Come on, Blurr.” Lancer waved her servos out in distress. “Shockwave. *Shockwave* ? He’s crazy, he tried to kill us!”

“We did kind of try to kill him too...” Firestar muttered.

“Shut up Firestar, that’s beside the point.” Greenlight huffed haughtily, crossing her arms. “What are you? Some kind of Decepticon defender now? You befriend one seeker and-”

“Nacelle is not my friend!” Firestar denied. “He’s just... not so awful, once you give him a chance. I guess I can see where Blurr is coming from. Decepticons aren’t so bad.”

Lancer raised a servo. “Uh, doesn’t Shockwave experiment on bots? I’d say that’s pretty bad.”

The femmes stared expectantly at Blurr.

“I can’t defend that but at-the-very-least he doesn't do it anymore and that counts right-right-right-?” Blurr offered nervously.

Greenlight dragged a servo down her faceplate. “Primus below.”

“That’s because there’s no one left to experiment on!” Lancer cried, exasperated.

“Well he- oh-Chromia-!”

“*What.*” Chromia cut into their conversation, appearing from seemingly nowhere with her servos set sternly on her hips. “Are you all talking about?”

“We-” Firestar started to explain, but Chromia spoke again, raising her voice to talk over her reply.

“-When you should be getting ready to *leave* .” She growled, “Get to it! And quit harassing Blurr. He’s going through enough already; he shouldn’t have to deal with you three on top of everything.”

“Yes Ma’am.” The femmes spoke in unison and snapped to attention before scampering off to collect what few supplies they’d brought with them.

Chromia pinched her nasal ridge and vented deeply for a long moment. “Sorry about that. It’s hard to keep those three under control without Elita.”

“No-worries-Chromia I know how they are but where is Elita One you said that she was damaged and that you have her but I haven’t seen her so where is she?”

Chromia held out a servo. “Would you like to see her?”

Blurr nodded enthusiastically and took her servo, standing from the slab of rubble he’d been resting on. He wobbled at first, the wires and joints in his legs aching from how much he’d pushed himself the prior cycle, before he was able to follow her to another side of the massive cavern.

It was cold and dark deep below the surface where they were, with only the pink glow of energon pipelines keeping everything lit. Crumbled, ancient buildings seemed to hold the ceiling aloft, their structures melding into one another, so old and unused that it was nearly impossible to tell their original purpose.

Chromia led him around a massive column that'd fallen on its side, and the first thing he saw was Alpha Trion. He had a femme's frame propped in his arms while he carefully fueled her. Blurr approached in a daze, the situation surreal to him.

Elita One lied as still as an offline frame. In fact, he'd have mistaken her for one if it weren't for the faint pink of the still-working paint nanites on her armor.

He reached for her, trembling, and touched her cold servo. It was wrong to see her in such a way. His leader had always had an air around her; a kind of energy that radiated, invigorating and inspiring confidence in the bots that surrounded her. It was strong enough to rival the presence of Optimus Prime himself, at times.

Now it was gone.

A weathered servo covered his. "Do not worry, young one. We will help her. *You* will help her, with that key of yours." Alpha Trion assured.

Blurr nodded, at a loss for words for once.

"That's right, Alpha Trion." Chromia gestured at the way they'd come in. "We should get out of here soon. Are you feeling all right to start, Blurr?"

Haywire was the first thing that Blurr checked when he ran an internal scan. All his systems felt fine, aside from lingering fatigue, and the dot in the corner of his HUD that represented Haywire's gestation progress remained green. He touched his abdominal plates fleetingly, trying to avoid the anxiety he felt about his impending emergence date.

Looking at Elita One, he felt that sense of urgency overcome him anyway.

He turned to Chromia and stood straighter. "I'm good to go Chromia we can get moving right away I'm ready-willing-and-able-!"

She clapped him on the shoulder pauldron. "Good mech. Let's get out of here."

It didn't take long for everyone to gather themselves and cluster behind Alpha Trion. The old mech led them deeper into the planet in a somber sort of trance while he followed both the pull of his spark, and his own ancient knowledge of the underground tunnels that led to Cybertron's core. He walked ahead of the group with Chromia, who carried Elita One in her arms. Following them with some distance between was the rest of the femmes, the seeker, and Blurr and Wheelie. Shockwave was last, his massive frame protecting the rear end of the procession.

Blurr peered behind himself sporadically, watching Shockwave and wishing he could walk closer with the rest of them. But Blurr understood the need for safety; there were many

dangerous things that lingered beneath the planet's surface. Scraplets, for example. Shockwave was the best option to guard their backs.

Or guard Blurr's back, at least.

He spared his conjunx a smile. Shockwave's finials twitched.

"He's not gonna disappear if you look away for too long, you realize that right?" Lancer bumped her shoulder to his teasingly. She was slightly strained; none of the femmes particularly liked Shockwave, but she was trying to be friendly.

"I'm not worried about that I'd never be worried about that but maybe I just like looking at him have you ever considered that mh-huh?"

"Blurr." Lancer covered her optics and groaned. "I don't *ever* want to consider that."

Blurr smirked. "Quit-complaining because I'm not nearly half as bad as you and Greenlight are you can't imagine what Moonracer and I had to deal with around you two-"

The small smile that Lancer had been sporting fell away. Her optics flicked briefly to Greenlight, who was walking ahead of them by several mechameters.

"I'm sorry about Moonracer. I'm sorry you two had to be there, alone at the base." she kicked a rock from her path, avoiding his gaze to stare at her own pedes. "I *miss* her. I missed all three of you when we thought you were gone. I'm so glad you and Wheelie are here, Blurr."

"I-miss-her-sososo-much-too-Lancer-" His spark burned. He could still see the explosion; Moonracer shattering in front of his optics.

Silently, Lancer raised her arm, and Blurr tucked himself to her side, wrapping the arm not holding Wheelie around her waist in a half-hug. Her vents cycled loudly, puffing a relieved sigh of hot air against his plating.

"You know," Lancer spoke after a klik, releasing Blurr from the hug. "I would've never asked this before, but... could I hold Wheelie?"

A surprised burst of laughter escaped Blurr, his sorrow shifting to amusement. He smirked. "Of course you can Lancer but are you sure about that because after all this time you have a lot of sparkling-sitting joors to make up for-!"

Lancer grinned and held out her servos. "After everything, Blurr, I'll do my time and enjoy it."

Blurr passed Wheelie off with a snicker. "Famous-last-words-!"

Wheelie was in a much-much-much better mood than he had been during the previous hectic day-cycles. He squealed, babbled, and yanked Lancer's helm protrusions while she endured his attention with a grin and a content EM field. The sparkling obviously remembered her and showed no sign of discomfort. The two clicked together the way that they'd used to, as if no time had passed at all.

A sour note of distrust toward Lancer trickled from Blurr's conjunx bond. He ignored it.

The lack of extra weight in the form of an orange sparkling put a spring in his steps, and he trotted beside Lancer with a noticeably happier demeanor. He would be so relieved when Haywire emerged- even without Wheelie, his frame was heavy and cumbersome from carriage, but he was determined to enjoy the chance to stretch his legs.

The layers of the planet that they trawled through were ever-shifting in design. Just as he'd seen in his previous stint underground; thousands of ancient cities and eras of Cybertronian history were revealed with every new layer reached. It was dark and cold. It felt simultaneously empty of all life, yet also teeming with invisible, imaginary optics that Blurr could feel on his plating acutely.

Blurr did not like it. Not-one-bit. Something seemed off, and the feeling of being followed increased as their journey stretched on from lasting mere joors to two whole solar-cycles.

Blurr spent his time alternating between walking and taking short naps plastered to Shockwave's side whenever they stopped for rest. The entire group was tense. An edge of distrust toward one another, and toward the ominous caverns around them, grew with every passing cycle. Blurr's presence around the femmes was welcomed, but Shockwave's appearance during breaks when they broke their line formation often caused long silences and withdrawn EM fields. The seeker avoided all of them like they were infected with cosmic rust- but even he, in his self-inflicted exile on the outer edge of their line formation, held his wings with poorly hidden anxiety.

:: Something-isn't-right-Shockwave-Shockwave-I-can-feel-it-! :: Blurr commed his conjunx during a refuel break.

Shockwave idly swirled the rationed cube of energon he'd gotten from Firestar in his servo. He did not respond for a long time. His single optic angled toward one dark end of the long blue hallway they were currently travelling through, deep in thought.

:: I sense it too. It is not rational, as there has been no evidence of other mechanical lifeforms this deep below the surface, and yet... :: He turned and swept his yellow gaze across Blurr's form. :: Keep yourself in the center of the formation with Wheelie when we continue our journey. I do not advise staying unprotected, with our situation so uncertain. ::

:: I-will-I-will-I-will but Shockwave you have to stay safe too I don't like you alone back there-! ::

:: If I could, I would remain at your side. :: Shockwave held his servo out and Blurr clasped it between two of his. Blurr was carefully tugged closer so that the Decepticon could press their helms together. :: But for now, this is the most beneficial arrangement. ::

Blurr nodded, though his vents sighed in frustration.

Shockwave smoothed his servo across Blurr's midsection, helm cocking to the side when Haywire let loose a burst of wild kicks. Blurr winced, optical lights flickering. :: How is your condition? Our situation is not ideal; I had hoped we would be able to utilize my laboratory

in Vos for your emergence, but now it appears we must depend upon our current companions for assistance. :: one finial gave a disdainful flick when he mentioned the Autobots. :: Have the emergence protocols activated? ::

Huffing in annoyance, Blurr rolled his optical lights and crossed his arms. :: *'Well'* is not a word I would use to describe how I've been in-fact I think a better word would be *'inconvenienced'* because it is inconvenient and furthermore it's impractical trying to run or even walk so I'm more-than-ready for this sparkling to emerge but I haven't seen any indication whatsoever of any protocols activating-! ::

:: I see. :: Shockwave seemed lost on how to respond to the rant, his finials ticking awkwardly. Blurr would find it endearing if he weren't so irritable from being sore and tired. :: Perhaps it is convenient that your protocols have not engaged. We have much distance to cover and it would not be ideal to stop in such an indefensible location. ::

"Perhaps-perhaps-perhaps." Blurr echoed aloud, spitting the words out snippily. He was sitting down, and he attempted to bend forward to brush dust from the side of his calf plating, only to find that he could barely bend enough to touch his knee joints. The discovery served to make him more annoyed. "How long will it be until we get to the core anyway because we've been walking for two whole cycles and I haven't seen anything really nothing-at-all except for buildings and more buildings and dark hallways and more dark hallways really how much longer is this going to take?"

Shockwave peered at Alpha Trion, who sat quietly a distance away out of audial range. "Our journey to the core should take two more cycles."

"At-least-!" Blurr groaned dejectedly. "That's-two-too-long!"

"Indeed." A tentative flash of agreement registered across their bond. Shockwave was functional, but his sustained injuries were not pleasant to walk with.

"Hey!" Chromia called from where the majority of the femmes had hunkered down to refuel by the tunnel wall. Her voice echoed. "Break time's over, back in line!"

Struts groaning, Shockwave forced himself to stand, then extended a servo to help Blurr do the same. Blurr left him with one last helm-tap before trotting to Lancer and Firestar's sides, safely wedged between the femme's frames when they started walking.

Lancer grinned and twisted at the torso so that Wheelie could see Blurr from where he was wrapped in her purple arms. "Say hi," She crooned. Wheelie squealed and revved his engine.

Rising onto the tips of his pedes, Blurr planted a kiss on his sparkling's cheek before smirking at Lancer. "At-this-point-I-think-I-think-you've-stolen-my-sparkling-!"

"You can have him back..." Lancer pouted. Blurr waved her off.

"No-way no-way I've got enough to carry at the moment so you can have him."

Her optics shifted to look at Blurr's frame curiously. "What's it like to carry? I've never seen or heard of any bot doing it. No offense, but it looks weird."

From the other side of Blurr, Firestar came closer, a similarly curious expression on her face. "It is a unique situation, Blurr. I didn't think it was still possible after learning about it from Ratchet. Apparently, it takes a lot of spark energy to generate a newspark during a merge. Though, with the strength of your spark, I guess your situation makes sense..."

Blurr shrugged and sidestepped a chunk of rubble while he walked. "It was weird-strange-odd at first but really honestly it's something incredible to have a spark tied to yours and I can't explain it but even if it is inconvenient it is absolutely-definitely-certainly worth it."

"Huh." Lancer chewed on that response for a klik, thinking. "Do you know what frame type it'll have?"

"Not-for-certain but it is a mini and I have a hunch it'll be a gunformer too-"

"Really?" Lancer tapped her chin guard. "Like a tiny Shockwave... Well, hopefully it'll have your faceplate, at least."

Blurr touched his own cheek and blinked. He hadn't even considered what his sparkling may *look* like. "Shockwave had a face once maybe it'll have what he had-"

"Shockwave? A *face*?" Lancer gawked. "How'd he, uh, lose it?"

Chills shivered through his circuits when he remembered Shockwave's memories. Blurr frowned. "Autobots-removed-it-as-a-punishment.-"

"What? No way-"

"- *Empurata*?" Firestar interrupted Lancer, looking grey.

Shocked, Blurr turned to her. "You-know-what-that-is-? I'd never even heard of it before Shockwave mentioned it and no one else has ever mentioned it or written about it on a history pad so how could you know and how could the Autobots do something like that-!" He unconsciously touched his chassis, where his Autobrand used to be.

"Uhm, what's empurata?" Lancer asked.

"A punishment given during the Golden Age, where a bot's servos and helm are removed. It was a long time ago. Before my time. Maybe Chromia knows more, but... I've only heard about it from Ratchet. Medic trainees had to know in order to treat certain mechs, but it's not meant to be common knowledge that the Autobots used to do such things. I wasn't allowed to talk about it."

"That's horrible." Lancer touched her Autobrand. "No one deserves to be punished like that. Not even *Shockwave*."

Blurr glanced behind himself, at his conjunx who walked far behind them, unaware of what they were discussing.

“I agree.” Firestar said, softly.

It was uncomfortably silent for the next few breems, the shuffling of their pedes was all that was audible. Blurr was fine with the silence- he wasn’t interested in continuing the conversation.

He studied the way the hallway they’d been travelling through slowly gave way to a narrow bridge which stretched across a vast cavern, lit by massive, sluggish moving pipelines of pink energon. The cavern had a few crumbling skyscrapers melded into the walls, but the cavern floor sank into an unending pit, with no end visible to his optics. He would be glad when they reached the end of the long bridge, on the other end of the cavern wall. It was as if the sensation of being watched had intensified when they stepped onto the bridge, unease settling into his struts.

Greenlight had walked ahead of Blurr, Firestar, and Lancer for most of their journey, Blurr had also noticed. The femme avoided both Alpha Trion and the other femmes, and despite her chattiness when they’d first begun walking, Blurr noticed how separate she seemed from everyone else. And how she’d avoided being near him for long stretches of time. She even avoided *Lancer*.

Brow ridges furrowed, he looked at Lancer. “I have to ask Lancer-Lancer is there something wrong with you and Greenlight because I haven’t seen you two talk at all and she hasn’t spoken to me either and so I have to know is something wrong-?”

Lancer winced. Her EM field reflected a lot of emotions, with regret and discomfort the most prominent. “Blurr. I want to tell you but it’s not my place to. It’s something Greenlight needs to do, it’s something she needs to make up to you.”

“But what would she need to make up for what’s going on-”

“Ahh,” Lancer groaned, “I said too much. Forget it, Blurr. I think you should hear what happened from her directly. I *really* can’t say any more.”

He huffed and crossed his arms. “Fine-fine-fine I’ll talk to her since you’re no help-”

Quickening his pace, he easily matched Greenlight’s stride in moments and left Lancer in the dust.

Greenlight jumped in surprise when he appeared. The short, sharp finials on her helm twitched once. She usually kept them still and under control. “B-Blurr!”

“Greenlight-!” Blurr squinted at her. “It’s been too-too-too long since we’ve seen each other so I thought I’d come and talk and walk with you-”

“That’s not-” Greenlight flustered. Her EM field was a horrible cloud of guilt and nervousness, and it made Blurr curious. What could have possibly happened for her to feel like *that*? “That’s not a good idea. You should stay back with the others, Blurr. It’s safer.”

“It’s only for a klik and really that’s interesting coming from you since you’ve been walking ahead of all of us all alone and that’s certainly not the safest thing to do either-” Blurr swayed closer to her while they walked across the bridge. “I think there’s something you’re not telling me and you really need to tell me what it is and why all of you are acting so strangely and-”

Pure horror split across Greenlight’s faceplates; her optics becoming pale discs fixated on something behind him. “Blurr, *move!*”

“You’re not getting rid of me that easily you have to- woah-!” Blurr was roughly shoved backwards by her. His rant dissolved into a scream when a metal pronged tentacle cut into the air over his helm and clamped onto Greenlight, ripping her from her place on the bridge and dragging her into the abyss below. He could hear the other bots behind him yelling and panicking, but he sprang forward, rushing to the railing to peer down.

“Greenlight-Greenlight-Greenight-!” Blurr chanted, terrified, his optics searching the dark abyss frantically.

A shape revealed itself, rising from shadow. Slowly, the shape solidified into a serpentine creature, bigger than any bot Blurr had known. Its maw tipped forward and opened, widening into a horrible pit of jagged denta. Multiple arms sprouted from its wormlike body, all tipped with claws.

It was a *Dweller* -

Blurr stepped away from the railing. His servo pressed over his midsection, terrified.

His pedes scrambled backwards in time for the creature to ram itself upward, crashing into the bridge and shattering a whole section of it, separating Shockwave, the femmes, and Blurr from Chromia and Alpha Trion.

Purple eclipsed his view and Shockwave’s yellow optic blinded him. A large servo gripped his arm. “We must retreat to-”

“No-!” He panicked. His processor kept replaying Greenlight disappearing, overlapping the image with Moonracer’s destruction and Beta’s grey frame. “Nononono-! We need to get her we need to get her-“

He swiveled around in a rush, searching for- “*You-!* You need to fly and get her back because if you don’t get her back we’ll probably-definitely never get her back and we need her I-need-her so *fly-!*”

Nacelle hissed, optics bouncing between the frantic speedster and the looming Dweller.

Firestar aimed her blaster at the creature. “I’ll lay some cover fire for you. Please, save her, Nacelle!”

Nacelle’s optics went wide and round. He floundered for the shortest moment. Then, his expression hardened with determination, wings fanning outward. He leapt into the air and

transformed, diving toward the Dweller while Lancer and Firestar shot at its body.

“I will aid them. Stay here.” Shockwave herded Blurr until he was safely behind the two femmes, and Lancer dropped Wheelie into his arms.

Vaguely, Blurr was aware of some sort of protocol activating, causing warning messages to bloom across his HUD. He stayed where he was, safe behind the femmes while the cavern was lit in bright flashes of blaster fire. Fear kept him frozen, knee joints clicking in their sockets with anxiety.

A blinding flash of purple light ripped through the cavern, followed by a deafening crash. The Dweller had been shot straight through its wormlike body by Shockwave’s altmode, leaving a gaping hole that sparked and gushed energon in waves. Its body slumped against the cavern wall and slowly slid down, disappearing into the dark pit.

Nacelle, who had dived to pry Greenlight from one of the Dweller’s slack tentacles, shot past them all and rose into the air, his frame spiraling upward before taking a sharp dip and landing on the bridge, dust scattering from where his pedes struck the ground. He cradled Greenlight’s small frame in his arms with extreme care and tilted her so that the other bots could inspect her.

“Guess-” Greenlight coughed static, limbs spasming while she stared blearily at Nacelle. “Guess there was a next time.”

He rolled his optical lights.

“Greenlight!” Lancer cupped her large servos around her helm. “You’re okay, oh- *your leg-*”

“Let me look!” Firestar barged in, nudging Lancer aside to see Greenlight’s legs. One was missing from the knee-joint down and all that was left was a mess of sparking wires and leaking energon. “I need to cauterize the open energon lines. Hold still.”

Blurr stumbled toward them to get a closer look but had to stop when a wave of dizziness hit his processor. His servo not holding Wheelie flailed out searching for something to brace himself on, and Shockwave caught it.

“Calm yourself.” Shockwave crooned, feeling the shivers wracking through him. “None have deactivated. The integrity of this section of the bridge is compromised, but we will cross momentarily.”

He was too frazzled to think coherently. He watched as Nacelle held Greenlight and Firestar in each arm and allowed Lancer to wrap her arms around his neck and hang off his back to fly them over the destroyed section of the bridge. Alpha Trion and Chromia waited for them on the other side, unharmed.

By the time Nacelle returned, Blurr was feeling more settled, but he still hadn’t addressed the protocol notifications on his HUD.

Nacelle opticked both of them apprehensively. “I can’t carry both of you at the same time.” He pointed at Blurr. “Hop on, motor-mouth. Bring your pit spawn too.”

Shockwave tensed. Blurr glared.

He wrapped his arms more securely around Wheelie and stepped forward. Nacelle bent to scoop him into his arms and took off, gliding across the cavern. Blurr hated both being so close to the seeker and the sensation of being dangled over a seemingly endless pit, but the experience ended quickly. As soon as his pedes touched the ground he rushed to the femmes and Alpha Trion, far away from the jagged ledge where the bridge had been smashed.

Across the pit, Nacelle landed in front of Shockwave.

“What do you think they’re saying?” Chromia wondered, servos on her hips.

“Nothing pleasant that’s-for-sure.”

They looked tense and shared a short conversation. A brief flicker of surprise and apprehension flashed across the conjunx bond, and then Nacelle hooked his servos under Shockwave’s arms and flew him slowly over the pit, struggling to carry his weight.

“Let us make haste.” Alpha Trion announced when they were all reunited. “I do not wish to linger near this cavern, there is another hall not much farther from here.”

Blurr waved off Shockwave’s fretting until they reached another rest point, and once they’d stopped he rushed out of formation to Greenlight’s side. Before he could get a word out she held out a servo. “I know. I’m sorry, Blurr. I should’ve explained before now, I shouldn’t have waited.”

He planted his aft on the ground and scooted closer to where she was propped against a wall, damaged leg splayed in front of her. She spoke for a long time, detailing what had happened after the power line explosion. All Blurr remembered from that time was a constant need to hide and escape capture, weighed down by the silence on his comms which reminded him that his team was gone, and that he was alone.

When she finished her story, she wrung her servos and looked into his optics. “I left you, Blurr. I am so sorry. I can’t- I know that isn’t enough, it doesn’t make up for what I’ve done, but I mean it. I’m sorry.”

Blurr frowned.

“Greenlight-are-your-mental-circuits-crossed-?!” He gave her a disbelieving stare.

“What?”

“I-mean-it-you’re-making-no-sense-! You did what you had to do to keep yourself safe as a scout and as there was little evidence of my functioning and your comm was damaged it was logical for you to escape and evade capture and sure you should have told Chromia about me but that’s in the past now and what’s passed is passed there’s no reason to linger on

something that's passed when what matters is here-and-now and all I care about is that we're together again-!"

Greenlight's intake opened and shut. "You're not mad? You... forgive me?"

He shuffled closer and squeezed her into a hug. "Of course you just saved me from being eaten of course I forgive you Primus-you're-so-slow-how-do-you-not-get-it-"

"Oh." She patted his back dazedly, still wrapped in his arms.

"Now you can quit being distant because we need to stick together because if we don't stick together then we won't be a team and-"

"I get it, Blurr."

Things were much smoother between all of them after that. The sensation of being watched and the paranoia and distrust they'd felt lessened to almost nothing while they navigated their way through the planet's underbelly.

When they neared the core, their surroundings changed drastically.

Ancient, crumbling caverns and tunnels gave way to sleek walkways and gleaming halls inscribed with gibberish symbols that his translator tried to decipher, yet ultimately failed to understand. Blurr flexed his plating and popped his tight joints, feeling strangely content. Warmth filled the air, emanating from the walls and floors. The energon pipelines grew brighter, flowed faster.

An ache twinged in his hip articulators that persisted despite the way the rest of his frame relaxed. He ignored it for the moment.

A hush settled over their group. They all felt the pull and swell of their sparks reacting to the sleepy pulse of an incomprehensively massive EM field.

Alpha Trion paused at a narrow entrance before they could step through. "We approach the spark and processor of Primus, now."

A chill shot through his frame. *Primus*. It seemed unreal, like he would walk through the entrance and find nothing on the other side.

But it was real. A blue-tinted spherical cavern greeted their optics and a golden orb appeared to float at its center, faceted with many triangular sides and tethered to its spot by long metal bridges wide enough for all of them to walk across. A broad platform encircled the orb, and they waited on it quietly. Wheelie was silent in his arms, focused on the orb as its gold light reflected on the glass of his optics.

Shockwave peered around, studying every micrometer of the cavern and orb.

"Hail to the mind of Primus, our wise Vector Sigma!" Alpha Trion cried; arms raised over his helm with the key in his servo. "We come to you with a request."

Vector Sigma shone brighter in the presence of the key, its facets shifting across its surface like tiles on a gameboard.

“I am Vector Sigma. Before Cybertron was, I was.” An ancient voice spoke calmly, though it was so loud it threatened to burst Blurr’s audials. “What is your request?”

Chromia stepped forward with Elita One in her arms. She set their leader onto the ground gently.

“My creation’s spark is dwindling, caused by a fault in her design which I created.” Alpha Trion gestured to her pale frame. “Please, my request is that you heal her spark and amend my mistake.”

A beam of light descended from one of Vector Sigma’s facets and alighted on Elita One’s frame, trailing golden grids over her plating.

“Your request is feasible.” Vector Sigma announced. “Request: Granted.”

The beam’s light intensified, growing brighter and hotter-hotter-hotter until Blurr had to shutter his optics and cover Wheelie’s. Shockwave stepped forward to shield them both from the heat.

The light died and left behind was Elita One’s vibrant frame, her pink hues deep and healthy, each joint and piece of armor polished to perfection and healed of scratches and dents. Aspects of her frame that had been missing or removed were restored, as if they’d never been gone. Noticing that, Shockwave’s end of the spark bond jolted with a complicated mix of emotions.

Elita remained still and offline.

“Elita One.” Vector Sigma called. “Awaken.”

Her engine roared to life. Optics unshuttered while her fans gasped and chassis heaved, fingers twitching at her sides.

“Oh, thank you-” Alpha Trion knelt and helped her to sit. “Thank you, thank you...”

“Alpha Trion?” Elita One’s calm voice rolled through the air. Tension released from Blurr’s hydraulics that he hadn’t even realized was there.

“Elita-you’re-alive-you’re-okay-”

“Elita!”

“I can’t believe it-”

Blinking and disoriented, Elita One was overwhelmed by the excitement from her team and their clumsy hugs and touches to her shoulders and servos. She smiled uncertainly. “What is going on? Where are we?”

Chromia placed a servo on her pauldron. “We’ll explain everything, Elita. But first-” she stood and pointed at Vector Sigma. “Vector Sigma! We have another request!”

Blurr jolted and rushed forward to stand at Chromia’s side after leaving Wheelie with Shockwave. He took the key from Alpha Trion and held it over his helm.

“State your request.”

“We request that Cybertron undergo regeneration.” Chromia spoke.

“State intended power source.”

“Hadeen, the closest red star.”

Vector Sigma was quiet for a long time. They all held their vents. Blurr’s arms shook, and his abdominal plates ached dully.

“Request: Denied.”

The femmes all spoke at once in disbelief. Chromia’s voice rose above the rest.

“*Why?*”

Vector Sigma did not respond; its light dimmed and facets stilled.

“No-” Chromia pressed a servo to her helm and groaned. Blurr felt numb all over in disbelief.

“We may try again-” Alpha Trion rushed to assure them all. “We must wait; then try again.”

“What are you trying to do?” Elita One asked from where she stood, lightly supported by Lancer and Firestar. She stepped away from their support after a klik and stood tall and focused. Blurr came closer to her and stole her attention.

“There’s been so-so-so much that’s happened Elita One ma’am but we’ve found a way to restore Cybertron and make it livable again but we need to-”

Elita One stared at his frame. She blinked rapidly like she was coming out of a daze and searched around the platform to see Shockwave holding Wheelie behind her, previously out of her line of sight. There was no warning from her; no words spoken before she seemed to come to a conclusion and lunged at Shockwave, pulling Wheelie from his arm and landing a vicious kick to his chassis that knocked him onto his aft.

“Ha!” Nacelle laughed, pointing at where Shockwave lied groaning on the ground. “I know how those kicks feel.”

“Elita no!” Firestar, Chromia, and Lancer grabbed at their leader, struggling to restrain her now that she was at full strength. Alpha Trion took Wheelie from Elita, bouncing the sparkling placatingly before he could cry at the sudden switch.

“How dare you?” Elita demanded, glaring holes into his armor. Blurr placed himself between his leader and his conjunx.

“Elita One ma’am it’s not what it looks like really-really-honestly it’s not so please calm down Shockwave is not our enemy we have a truce and he’s my conjunx so please don’t hurt him-”

“*Conjunx* ?” She shook off the femmes’ grasps and took Blurr by the shoulders. “I remember clearly now, Blurr. You and Moonracer were left at the base, and the power line-” she pulled him into an embrace, and he could feel her horrified shudder where his cheek was pressed to her chassis.

“What’s happened? Where is Moonracer?” She asked when she pulled back. Blurr fidgeted uncomfortably.

“She helped Wheelie and I escape and-and-and-” His spark stuttered. “She couldn’t outrun the explosion.”

Elita’s face went still and her expression hollowed, stricken by grief. “My fault...” she muttered, pressing a fist over her spark. “She was the bravest of us. I failed her as I failed you, and I will never make that mistake as a leader again. Never again, Blurr. I swear it.”

“Our shared goal is to use Vector Sigma to revitalize our planet and avoid further fatalities. As the leader of the Autobots, do you wish to continue our truce?” Shockwave spoke for the first time since entering the cavern, now standing at his full height, towering over their frames.

Elita One watched him closely, optics bouncing between him and Nacelle. Blurr placed a servo on her arm. “For us to get Vector Sigma to help we need to be united and if we’re not united and we don’t move past our factions then we’ll never get its help so if you want to help me then we need your support Elita One ma’am-”

She considered his words for a long moment, then nodded curtly. “I agree to the truce.”

“I believe we should try again now.” Alpha Trion gestured to Blurr. “You must be the one to submit the request, as Beta suggested.”

His fingers rubbed nervously over the key, but he held his chin high and approached Vector Sigma again.

“Vector-Sigma-” Blurr held the key above his helm, and the orb reacted to its presence, shimmering alive as it woke again. “We request that you approve Cybertron’s regeneration-!”

Another beam of light descended from a facet and scanned Blurr from helm to pede. Vector Sigma was quiet, its facets shifting and trembling faster than before, seemingly excited or agitated.

“Carrier.” it observed, at length. “Your request is feasible. Vector Sigma cannot approve. Primus: must be consulted.”

“What-? Why can’t you approve it I thought you could approve it so why-”

“I am Vector Sigma. The will of Primus is my directive. Directive: creation and continuation of the transformer species. Autobot-Decepticon conflict: hinders continuation. Autobot-Decepticon conflict: hinders creation. Conclusion: Autobot-Decepticon existence conflicts with directive. Requestor: neither Autobot nor Decepticon. Requestor: carrying. Requestor: approved by directive. Conflicting Restriction: placed on regeneration post Quintesson removal. Request: cannot be approved by Vector Sigma.” Vector Sigma spun in place and grew brighter, its facets rattling. “Standby for connection.”

Gasps rung out among their group when the cavern trembled. Deafening clicks and whirrs filled their audials as the bottom half of the spherical cavern transformed aside, revealing a spark so massive and old that it caused the temperature to drop and red light to bathe their armor. A metal ball emerged from the spark, rising to meet their platform.

“The Allspark.” Shockwave observed aloud, his optic gleaming with interest.

A single channel of energy shot from the spark of their creator and concentrated on the Allspark, which shone intensely until a ghostly shape formed around it, solidifying itself into the form of a bot.

“I am the Allspark, Primus speaks through me.” A shimmering mirage of Moonracer intoned, standing on their platform with the Allspark nestled where her spark would be. “Explain your request.”

“Moonracer-” Blurr blurted, optics blown wide, but Moonracer did not show any trace of recognition. Her expression remained cool and blank, patiently waiting.

“Her image has been utilized by the Allspark as a manifestation through which it can communicate, she is not the true Moonracer.” Alpha Trion supplied. Blurr rapidly blinked tears from his optics.

He vented deeply to settle himself and ignored the building pain in his hips. “Our request is that you undergo regeneration by using the nearby red star Hadeen as fuel so that you will be healed-restored-repaired and we can live on your surface safely again-!”

The cavern shuddered while Primus’ massive spark flickered. Moonracer’s image tensed as though in pain.

“I am tired. You have injured me.” She groaned, her voice multilayered and creaking with age. “My creations, you will injure me again. You will injure one another. I cannot abide it.”

“We-have-a-truce-!” Blurr hurried to reply. “We won’t hurt you or each other we won’t fight at all anymore-”

“Your claim lacks evidence.” Her arm swept out to point at each bot with a badge. “The fighting will never end.”

It went silent on the platform. They all vented quietly, EM fields drawn taut. A horrible jolt of pain shot through Blurr's sensory net, originating in his hips. He weathered through it with grit denta and waved away new warnings on his HUD.

"I will provide evidence." Elita One stepped forward, her Autobadge held in front of her. "Autobot and Decepticon are no more: I am Cybertronian."

She threw her badge at Moonracer's pedes. The other femmes gasped and muttered to one another behind her. Firestar was the first of them to follow Elita's lead, stepping forward and tossing her brand down with Elita's.

"Despite our differences-" Firestar looked to Nacelle and nodded, once. "-we are all Cybertronian."

Alpha Trion, Greenlight and Lancer shed their brands after, leaving Chromia standing tensely. Her brow ridges were knit together and drawn low. She closed her optics and vented deeply enough for it to be audible, and then her shoulders relaxed.

Her brand clinked against the others at Moonracer's translucent pedes.

Blurr tapped jittery fingers on his bare chassis. His brand had been left in his bar in Iacon, sitting gathering dust on one of the shelves before the city's destruction. Its removal hadn't been so grand or intense- it'd been simple, as simple as a first step. He looked to Shockwave. They all did. His conjunx's side of the bond was barred from him and he waited in bated anticipation to see if it would break.

"We are not the same. Our frames and functions possess more differences than similarities, and from that observation I can see no logical reason as to why we should align ourselves." Shockwave touched the brand magnetized to his gun-arm reverently, tracing its lines and ridges while his optic dimmed in contemplation. He looked away.

"But I... I can see the most logical path clearly now- I know what purpose I desire to function for." His gaze settled solely, completely on Blurr.

"I will not tolerate a new Golden Age; I will not submit to a position of servitude, indentured or otherwise. I am the Guardian of Cybertron and I will command it as such, though, not as a Decepticon-" He cast off the brand on his gun-arm. It landed with a clatter on the pile of badges. "-but as a mere Cybertronian."

Elita One narrowed her optics at him. "I would not condone a repeat of the atrocities of the Golden Age either, Shockwave, but you cannot command us as a lone dictator. We must all be free to avoid repeating the mistakes of our past."

Shockwave's finials ticked. "Your statement is logical. I would acquiesce to sharing equal power to all of you in legal matters, provided I am in command of the planet's security."

She pressed a fist to her chassis, over her spark, and inclined her helm. "Very well, Shockwave."

“We are in accord, then.” Almost awkwardly, Shockwave mimicked her gesture and dipped his helm. “We all are one.”

Elita’s helm snapped up, stunned, with her wide optics on Shockwave and intake parted in silent surprise.

“All are one?” Moonracer’s ghostly form echoed, the Allspark brightening in her chassis. A rumble started in her chest, sputtering out through her lips which curled slowly, cracking into a grin as her rumble turned to laughter.

Her posture relaxed from stiffness and her optics glittered. “I knew this would work.”

“*Moonracer-* ?” Blurr extended an arm to try and touch, but his servo passed through her form.

“It is her!”

“Moony-”

Moonracer clucked at them reproachfully. “Don’t wear out my designation, of course it’s me!”

“But how?” Alpha Trion breathed.

She tapped a finger to her chin guard. “Hmm I’m actually not entirely sure *how*. I remember waking here,” She touched the Allspark. “after I, uhm, died. I think Primus wanted me to help -he wants peace *really* badly- and that’s why he let me keep my awareness in the Allspark. I used what I could to lead you all here.”

“My-night-fluxes-it-really-was-you-?”

“It was, Blurr. It was easiest to connect to your spark during recharge cycles. You have a unique spark, Blurr, but it does jumble messages up so annoyingly...”

“I should have listened to you Moonracer I should have listened to you and I should have ran so much faster when the power line exploded I should have been able to save you too so you would have never offlined and I’m so-”

“Ah! Don’t say sorry!” Moonracer cut him off, wagging a finger. “That was my fault, not yours. Besides, I don’t mind being offline so much now. I was able to do this for you, Blurr. I want our world to be better, I want you all to make it better together. It’s the only way.”

She looked to each of them and made a sound like her vocalizer reset despite not having a physical frame. “Your request is granted.”

“Please-please-please don’t go I didn’t even get to say goodbye the first time and now you’re leaving again and I-”

She hovered a servo over Blurr’s chassis. “I don’t have a frame anymore, so I can’t touch you, but I want to leave this.”

His plating tingled where her touch would have been, a stream of data transmitting through his metal and connecting to his spark. A memory upload. One of her *last* memories, and he felt it as if it were happening to him right then; their last hug, with Hadeen's light warming their frames. He smiled, lubricant leaking from his optics.

Moonracer addressed them all. "Remain in this chamber, nothing outside will survive regeneration. You will all be safe here and energon will be provided soon. You're all in for a show, but..." she arched a brow ridge at Blurr and gave him a cheeky grin. "I think *you* need to focus on something else right now. There's someone you've been ignoring, Blurr."

Blurr's engine whined, knees threatening to buckle but Shockwave caught him in time to avoid any fall. His hip joints hissed and popped in the beginning sequences of a transformation he had never gone through before. It hurt-hurt- *hurt*-

"This is the last time you will see me here. I will meet you all again one cycle, in the Allspark." Moonracer stepped backward and waved to her team, then looked at Blurr with a sad smile. "Goodbye, Blurr."

"Moonracer-!" He flung his servo out to her uselessly. Elita One and his team's voices rang out with him, calling goodbyes to Moonracer as they watched her frame shimmer out of existence, the Allspark returning to Primus' spark below them.

"Commencing: Regeneration." Vector Sigma announced. "Initializing beginning sequences. Countdown until first stage: three-point-six joors."

"We have some time before it begins." Shockwave noted, helping Blurr to sit. "You did not inform me that the emergence protocols had begun, Blurr."

"Oh frag..." Firestar knelt at his other side and clutched her red helm. "Oh, *frag* this is happening. I don't even know-" Noticing him watching her with narrowed optics, she forced an unconvincing smile. "I mean... we've got this!"

"Shockwave-I-meant-to- Oh it hurts-it-hurts-
ithurtsIdidn'twantofocusonitearliersinceitwasabadtimebutnowithurts!"

An ache was felt in nearly every strut in his body, pain lancing through him while he slumped to the side. Even the uncharacteristically slow roll of Haywire's frame in his gestation tank made him wince. Red light from their creator's spark smeared in his vision, out of focus and hazy. He vented heavily, clutching his midsection and hiding his face against Shockwave's chestplate.

Everything felt like it was happening far too quickly even for him while his emergence protocols fully activated and occupied his HUD with a complicated countdown display. One thing kept Blurr focused through the pain, and that was the ironically comforting thought that Haywire was at least like him in one crucial way: *impatient*.

Chapter End Notes

It begins :)))))

UPDATE 7/13/24: I'm sooo sorry for the long wait 😭😭😭 this last chapter is killing me because I want it to be perfect. I'm getting there though!!

Here is a little snippet from the upcoming chapter:

"Shockwave did not answer Blurr's rambling questions, but Elita suspected he was far too overcome to speak. His EM field, though cold and oppressive as most warframes' were, held a sense of awe and affection that she had not thought he was capable of even feeling, let alone expressing so intensely."

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

I am SO sorry about the wait on this chapter. Life got crazy and also I was so sad to finish this :((

I hope y'all enjoy it! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I am pleased to see that we have differences. May we together become greater than the sum of both of us.”

- Star Trek

Elita One hadn't felt this healthy since... well, before the war. Her frame was pristine, glimmering and thrumming with energy, invigorated by the power of Primus' very spark. She felt amazing; primed, ready for action, and- *completely useless* .

All she could do in this situation seemed to be to wait, watch, and support from a polite and somewhat awkward distance while Blurr paced between contractions. His voice could be heard from the other end of the circular platform, echoing spark-breaking babbles and whines of pain, and she would've liked to approach and give words of encouragement but the awkwardness of encroaching on such a vulnerable moment held her back. That, and Shockwave looked to be on the verge of shooting any bot that wasn't Alpha Trion or Firestar, and even then, those two were on thin ice after having to examine Blurr's array to check his dilation status.

She'd tried to turn her energy elsewhere, but it seemed even the goal of healing their planet was settled. Vector Sigma spun busily behind all of them, and a solid spherical force field had formed around their platform and the orb, presumably to protect them from the regeneration process. The time for the first stage to begin was fast approaching, at least according to Alpha Trion and Vector Sigma's counter.

It was an extremely strange situation to find herself dropped into. A gap existed in her memory that spanned nearly a kilocycle, and the changes she saw in her team were drastic and jarring. None were as glaring as Blurr's, given his carriage and... new relation, but they

were still present among the femmes in other, more subtle ways. The most obvious was the exhaustion in their optics and the damage to their frames.

“Think we can get that thing to give me leg?” Greenlight asked from where she was held in Lancer’s arms, her stump leg stretched out in front of her and finger pointing at Vector Sigma. Nacelle, the red seeker, huffed a quiet laugh but stopped when he noticed Elita’s gaze.

Elita’s engine coughed and she swiftly looked away. She would... deal with the seeker situation later. Once she came up with a polite way to apologize for... killing his trinemate. He seemed to be calmer now, anyway. Changed by time and circumstance just like the rest.

“Once the planet has been restored, we may petition Vector Sigma again to mend our frames.” Alpha Trion replied from Elita’s side. He was taking a short break to rest with them while Firestar watched Blurr, as the speedster’s frame was not yet ready to deliver.

Greenlight groaned dejectedly. Firestar had severed the pain receptors in her legs, but Elita could imagine how frustrating it must be for her to be stuck unable to transform or walk.

Chromia rolled her optical lights. “Quit whining. It’ll take, what, a couple of joors? You’ll be fine until then.”

“It may take a cycle or two, at least, Chromia. Mere *joors* would not be possible. Rebuilding a planet is no small endeavor.” Alpha Trion chided haughtily.

Chromia crossed her arms and narrowed her optics, looking ready to argue, and Elita bit the inside of her cheek to keep from smiling at their ridiculous interaction.

Gently, she bumped Chromia’s shoulder with her own and gave her a *look* .

Chromia’s EM field flared, flustered, and she glanced away, choosing to drop the argument to ask Lancer something else.

Ignoring their conversation as it spiraled into another topic, Elita leaned toward her creator where he sat next to her in part of a circle with the other bots.

“Alpha Trion, may I hold him?” She gestured to Wheelie in his arms.

“Of course.” He passed Wheelie to her gently. The youngling was both smaller and bigger than she’d remembered. He cuddled to her plating like he remembered her, but his little frame trembled with stress every time Blurr’s pained cries reached their audials.

“Shh...” Elita soothed, trailing fingers over his soft cheek.

It was incredible, she thought. Two sparklings, a restored Cybertron, and the end of the war... At times she was uncertain if she was truly awake, and not being deceived by a perfect recharge fantasy.

:: Elita, could you come over here real quick? Bring Wheelie too. :: Firestar commed her suddenly, as Blurr’s cries sharpened.

:: Are you certain? I don't- ::

:: Yes. Get over here. Now. ::

She bristled for a moment at the commanding tone from her subordinate before she caught herself. *Medics* , she sighed.

When she approached the other side of the platform, she immediately found herself under the hostile gaze of Shockwave. He seemed to soften at the sight of Wheelie in her arms, but he still watched her with open distrust. He and Blurr knelt on the ground, facing one another so that Shockwave could support the speedster, and Blurr could rest his helm on Shockwave's shoulder.

Alpha Trion had followed her, and he rushed to help Firestar where she crouched at Blurr's side. Elita kept her gaze above the waist to avoid seeing anything private or traumatizing, but a horrible cracking-grinding noise drew her optics to Blurr's back and hips anyway.

Nausea turned her tank. She'd never seen any bot's frame transform like *that* . It was horrific. His internal struts were visible as his plating separated at the seams to make room for the sparkling's exit. The mechanisms in his hips jutted outward, transformed and rearranged into a painful, unnatural configuration. She hurried to stand slightly behind and to the side of Shockwave, preferring to risk the gunformer's wrath rather than be in a position that gave her a clear view of Blurr's emergence.

Blurr raised his helm to peer blearily over Shockwave's shoulder. He flopped a servo out. "WheelieWheelieWheelie-"

She inched closer to allow him to touch Wheelie's helm. The sparkling's engine purred while a smile made his optics squint happily.

"Dilation at 88%, we're so close, Blurr." Firestar announced. She and Alpha Trion muttered to each other after that, rushing around with the few first aid supplies they'd brought with them.

Blurr's vents were heavy, pained pants of air that made her wince. He gurgled a mess of whines and complaints.

"You're doing very well." Elita praised, deciding to do what she could to try and help. Shockwave turned his helm to watch her over his shoulder.

"Reallyreallyreally-?" Blurr panted, "You'renotmadatme-?"

"No. *Never* ." she assured.

She spared Shockwave a sharp glance, to let the gunformer know what she thought of *him* , specifically. Shockwave flicked his finials rudely in response, almost like Optimus did when he was annoyed.

She couldn't help but smile at the odd mental comparison. No, she'd never be angry with *Blurr* . Not for this. "I am so proud of you, Blurr."

He shuddered and gave her a shaky smile before the next contraction hit. Shockwave ignored her presence, choosing to focus on rubbing soothing circles onto Blurr's plating.

There were horrible noises that ensued for far too long after that. The sound of cracking joints and the acrid scent of internal energon made her plating itch in discomfort. She distracted herself by focusing on Shockwave, who was unfortunately also a source of discomfort.

It was whiplash to wake and find that a very dangerous enemy had somehow managed to undergo a drastic change of personality, *and* spark one of her three most vulnerable team members. She'd wanted to throttle him at first, but now there she was, observing him fretting over Blurr.

He was an attentive conjunx, she'd give him that.

Her attention was pulled away from Shockwave when Blurr abruptly straightened. A shrill, static-laced wail left his vocalizer while his motors squealed from strain. His face went grey and his optics widened, staring blindly at the ceiling of the cavern.

"The helm is out, Blurr. Keep going!"

Elita had no desire to *ever* see Blurr's array, but she could not help but lean forward with equal parts morbid curiosity and eager excitement at Firestar's words.

Energon was everywhere, though Alpha Trion and Firestar's cleaning efforts and constant wiping kept Blurr's legs and array fairly clear. She could not focus on the emerging greyish helm because of the instant nausea she felt from seeing how it stretched and *tore* -

'Holy Primus.' She leaned away to let Shockwave's shoulders block her view again.

She dazedly patted Blurr's arm, uncaring of Shockwave's sharp glare. "You are doing an incredible job, Blurr."

Blurr did not seem to hear her. His frame trembled and he bore down, his servos clutching Shockwave's pauldrons in a death grip while yellow light illuminated one side of his face. Shockwave's optic glowed brighter, and he cupped the back of Blurr's helm to bring them closer together and murmur something that Elita could not hear.

Then, in one quick moment, Blurr sagged like a limp doll in Shockwave's hold and Firestar let out a triumphant noise, holding an energon-smeared grey form in her servos. Alpha Trion helped Shockwave rearrange Blurr until his back plating was pressed to Shockwave's chest; the former Decepticon supporting him in his lap so he could sit up and see his sparkling.

Blurr reached out, and when Firestar gave him over he immediately pulled the sparkling close to his chassis.

Elita subtly scooted to the side to get a better look. The sparkling's plating looked to be a shade of grey that worried her at first -a near deathly tone- but closer inspection revealed he was closer to a dusky, washed-out hue of purple rather than grey.

A delighted smile lit Blurr's exhausted faceplates. "Oh-wow-oh-wow oh he's perfect isn't he Shockwave-Shockwave look-look-look isn't he perfect he looks just like you but he's so small do you think that's normal for a minibot because I didn't expect him to be so tiny and he didn't feel that small coming out but he's perfect isn't he-" Blurr nuzzled him, "- Haywire you're so perfect-precious-amazing-perfect huh-"

Haywire, it seemed, had inherited every single trait of Shockwave's frame and alt-mode, right down to the tiny square finials on his grey helm. Elita would not have guessed that Blurr had played any part in his creation, except that when he turned his helm to squint blue optics around blindly, his faceplates were unmistakably influenced by Blurr's sharp features.

A part of Elita wondered, inappropriately, if Shockwave was disappointed that his pre-empurata face had not been passed down to his sparkling, but one look at him told Elita that Shockwave was not feeling one single *iota* of disappointment. He was shaking. His finials twitched in flustered spasms while he stroked a finger over one of Haywire's finials, the gesture impossibly delicate for a mech so massive.

He did not answer Blurr's rambling questions, but Elita suspected he was far too overcome to speak. His EM field, though cold and oppressive as most warframes' were, held a sense of awe and affection that she had not thought he was capable of even *feeling*, let alone expressing so intensely.

Elita, Firestar, and Alpha Trion politely busied themselves and pretended to focus on other things when Shockwave gathered Blurr and Haywire close to shakily rasp low, affectionate words into Blurr's audial. Elita caught the tail end of a murmured "*love*" and "*you*" that made her faceplates flush, embarrassed to be witnessing something so odd and private.

For several breems she felt somewhat out of place on the outskirts of the scene with Wheelie, watching Alpha Trion and Firestar fuss over Blurr and Haywire until Shockwave set his yellow gaze on her.

He gestured for her to come near.

Warily, she knelt at Blurr's side and presented Wheelie to him. Blurr smiled and shifted Haywire closer, allowing the two to meet at last. It seemed to Elita that Wheelie recognized Haywire's EM field and understood, in some vague way, who he was seeing.

"Careful." Shockwave murmured, guiding Wheelie's servo to gently touch the side of one of Haywire's delicate arms.

Wheelie beeped in delight and tried to wiggle out of Elita's arms to get closer, but she held him tightly in her lap. Being so close to the newspark she could not help but marvel at him; at the diaphanous stretch of his protometal over his facial mechanisms, and the thinness of his armor as his slow vents caused it to shift in and out of place.

How a world so cold and barren as Cybertron had allowed the creation of something so clearly requiring great love and care to survive was a mystery to her. It was not a good world they lived on. It was broken, and they were the bots that had broken it, but... looking at the scene in front of her she felt something inside of her reawaken. Something important.

That something grew while she watched Shockwave curl his servo over Blurr's, who in turn held both of their sparkling's servos in his. It grew when she heard the awe-struck sighs of Alpha Trion and Firestar behind her, similarly transfixed by the scene. It felt like it would burst out of her chassis and fill the cavern with warmth when she noticed that the rest of the bots had quietly approached to get a closer look at Haywire, their tired faces alight with interest.

It felt like everything would be okay, as if... she now had proof that their world could become a better place some cycle.

It felt like hope.

--

This was emotion. Shockwave had thought he'd felt the full scope of it before; in his rage and his lust and his sorrow, but all that paled in contrast to the intensity of the love he felt now, holding his family in his arms.

It was so delicate, this moment. He could not let it go, but as with all things it logically had to come to an end.

Though Shockwave bristled at the lack of privacy Blurr currently had, he conceded that he needed to be checked over and cleaned by Firestar and Alpha Trion to ensure his frame was in good condition. With Blurr separated from them, Wheelie was taken away by Elita One for refueling, and Shockwave was left alone with his newborn sparkling.

He felt an unfamiliar fear grip him when he looked at the form cradled in his servo.

Haywire yawned, his pudgy protoform face shifting sweetly with the movement.

How could Shockwave keep such a vulnerable thing safe? How could he hold it within his single servo, which had dealt such violence, and not hurt it? It frightened him. He was not made for softness like the former Autobots around him and he had never wished to be like them, but now he envied them. A part of him wanted to be gentle.

Perhaps, with time, he would develop the ability.

And time looked to be in abundance at that moment. He could barely tear his optic away from his creation, but when he did, he took note of the Regenesys process. He had hardly noticed how quickly it was progressing, and the first stage mentioned by Vector Sigma seemed to be fast approaching.

He was not sure what the entire process would entail and while the specter of his conjunx's friend had promised their safety, Shockwave was not entirely convinced.

Though, he could not attempt to leave the cavern even if he had the inclination to, as its entire spherical shape around them had become encased in a translucent energy field, similar to the one which had sealed oxygen into the Quintesson escape pod. Though this energy field was discovered to be—after much fruitless bashing on it by several of the less intelligent femmes—apparently impenetrable.

Vector Sigma spun round in its place, murmuring a countdown for their audials while its facets shimmered mesmerizingly, but Shockwave could not find it within himself to pay much attention to it. He looked to Haywire and felt his spark grow warm.

Haywire's face was smushed into a sleepy scowl, adorably reminiscent of his carrier's pinched expressions. The resemblance to Blurr was uncanny, especially when paired with the narrow shape of his optics and nasal ridge. Shockwave could not deny; he was enamored.

Something green and orange moved into the peripheral of his vision, and he raised his gaze to see Lancer nervously shuffling closer to him with the one-legged Greenlight in her arms. Nacelle trailed behind them, reluctantly interested.

"What is it you want?" Shockwave snapped when the femmes' hemming and hawing began to grate on his circuits.

"Uhm—" Lancer's engine coughed nervously. "Could we see your sparkling, Shockwave, uh, sir?"

"He's not our boss." Greenlight muttered at a volume she must have believed he could not hear. "We don't have to call him *sir* -"

"I'm trying to be polite—" Lancer whispered back, and Nacelle rolled his optical lights behind them both.

Shockwave had very little desire to make nice with mechanisms so clearly lacking in intelligence, and certainly he did not wish to disturb his sparkling from his rest, but it seemed logical to allow this one moment of observance in order to foster... *friendship* with his new allies.

Shockwave turned to allow them a look. "Keep quiet and do not touch his plating; he is not yet immune to communicable viruses."

Optics wide, all three bots came closer.

"Oh," Lancer whispered. "He's *beautiful*."

Shockwave's finials raised in surprise at the praise. He set his shoulders and puffed his chassis; pride coursing through his circuits. Of course, it was only logical that his creation was beautiful.

The very *act* of creation displayed by Blurr had been both beautiful and terrible; Shockwave felt simultaneously in awe and fearful of it.

When the femmes and Nacelle were shooed away by Firestar, and an exhausted Blurr and Wheelie were returned to his arms, Shockwave contemplated their situation quietly. Their bubble, trapped safely with Vector Sigma, remained untouched but the cavern around them began to tremble; massive, interlocking mechanisms shifting aside in slow waves of metal.

Alpha Trion stood to announce, "The first stage begins!"

At his words, it seemed all the bots present shrank closer together, till Shockwave and his family were surrounded by their small frames. They were wary of the unstable world beyond their bubble-encased platform, and rightfully so. Even *Shockwave* was wary, though his curiosity threatened to surpass his apprehension when the cavern continued to transform. The scale of the transformation they were witnessing was nearly incomprehensible, and despite his superior processing power he struggled to understand it wholly.

"Shockwave-!" Blurr grasped his gun arm, staring at something above them. "Look-look-look at that-!"

Shockwave clutched his conjunx and creations closer when he looked up and saw the *stars* .

Cybertron had completely split open, from the surface straight to the core where they sat. The divide continued to grow, steadily opening to expose their planet's innards. A transformation of this magnitude, no matter how sedately it proceeded, should have been loud enough to destroy all of their audials.

Shockwave peered closer at the force field that kept them safe from the vacuum of space. It must've muted much of the sound, he concluded. Even the chill of Primus' spark and the frigidness of space was kept at bay by the force field. Shockwave was intrigued; perhaps such technology would have use in the future, when he was once more in control of Cybertron's security...

Blurr sighed and slumped against him, wriggling into a more comfortable position with their sparklings nestled against his chassis. Shockwave gently touched the side of his helm, silently inquiring, and Blurr gave him a reassuring nod back.

"Has Hadeen always been so close?" Lancer wondered aloud, and the groups' collective attentions snapped up once more, this time to the near blinding sight of their red sun growing ever closer.

Cybertron continued to shift around them, opening to welcome the star as it approached. On either side of the rift in Cybertron's spherical shape, two protruded shapes emerged from its shifting mass, eerily configuring themselves into massive arms. It felt as though it took ages for the arms to grow wrists, then palms, and finally long searching fingers that grasped for Hadeen hungrily. Beneath their platform and Vector Sigma, the chamber which held their creator's spark began to open, revealing the red spark within.

"Look behind yourselves." Elita One whispered.

Optics larger than towering buildings unshuttered slowly behind them, drowning them in blue light. A face formed within the walls of the cavern, so large Shockwave could barely see all

of it from their position on the platform.

“Primus!” Alpha Trion gasped reverently.

The face of their creator was old and ragged, and his spark was a weak and gargantuan thing. His body groaned around them, reaching for Hadeen, and Shockwave had to shield his conjunx and creations with his arms, blocking the immense light from the sun from frying their optical sensors.

The heat of Hadeen being absorbed by their creator’s spark grew to such unimaginable heights that the interior of their bubble warmed considerably despite the shielding. Shockwave hazarded a glance when the light began to dim, and he marveled at the sight that met his optic; *pure* liquid protometal surrounded them, reflecting waves of blue light from Primus’ reborn spark. The entire planet was in a liquidized state; a constant rolling flux that reminded him of the scans he’d taken of the early stages of Haywire’s frame development.

As their bubble’s temperature dropped, the protometal outside began to harden. Rearranging itself into familiar internal mechanisms. A massive face formed again, but Shockwave startled at its new appearance; Primus appeared *young*. His age seemingly not much older than Wheelie, with smooth, blemish-free round cheeks and wide optics. Though, at a closer look, those optics appeared young in make but there was a glint within them that belied their creator’s true age.

Those optics stared down at where they were all huddled, struck silent by awe, and Shockwave felt something he rarely ever felt; *humbled*. He felt tiny, insignificant, and powerless to the being that towered around them. To his *creator*.

Slowly, Primus’ youthful lipplates curled, smiling for the briefest astro second before he seemed to grow tired and drift into a deep recharge, his face gently transforming back into the cavern.

“Final sequence: commencing. Countdown until surface temperature adequate for mechanism survival: twenty-seven joors.” Vector Sigma rattled behind them, almost ignored by most.

It was quiet in the cavern for a long time, all of them rattled and exhausted from witnessing something no other of their species had ever witnessed. Blurr, worn from emergence, fell into recharge against Shockwave’s chassis, his long legs sprawled out comfortably. Shockwave contented himself with examining his tired sparklings, their delicate chassis’ rising and falling with their soft vents.

He assumed, from Vector Sigma’s endless spew of information, that once the process was complete, they would be led out from the cavern and to the new world beyond.

He looked at his family in his arms, and suddenly wondered at all that had changed in such a small amount of time. He remembered his previous convictions, held only a kilocycle ago, that inspired him to work toward a Cybertron that was purged clean of all Autobot resistance. Of Autobot *existence*.

Now, he could scarcely entertain the idea of such a goal coming to fruition.

Holding his creations and conjunx close, Shockwave knew that if Megatron should return, he would likely be displeased with Shockwave and his failure to secure Deception domination. But Shockwave would not cower before his former leader and repent. He would not apologize for his failed promise.

He would stand tall with pride at the knowledge that Cybertron would not be as Megatron left it; it would be *much* improved.

--

Blurr could not stop staring at his sparkling, and tracing his fingers over his tiny nasal ridge, and tweaking his finials, and fussing with the position of his limbs, and—

Haywire beeped, grumpily blinking at him with a pinched expression, and Blurr ceased his pestering. For the moment.

He was honestly obsessed; his sparkling was wonderful. He was, in Blurr's opinion and despite Shockwave's disagreement, a miniature Shockwave in nearly every way. He was dense, too. A perfect gunformer build. Blurr had trouble holding him for long periods of time without the gears in his arms straining.

His sparkling was the most perfect mechanism to ever exist—aside-from-Wheelie-of-course—and he occupied most of Blurr's processor and attention, but a part of him still coiled with anxiety from being trapped within an underground cavern. He wanted them all to get let out-out- *out* of their bubble already. He was *itching* to see the new Cybertron.

The reasons why he wasn't pacing grooves into the platform were one, the sparkling in his arms, and two, his legs felt like they'd been filled with energon jelly. The transformations he'd undergone during emergence were the most horrible-painful-terrible things he'd ever experienced and he'd been left perpetually exhausted and aching all over for the past twenty joors.

Shockwave and Alpha Trion made him stand and take a few steps every joor, and he whined and grumbled and muttered at them every time. It was terrible. He hoped that he would heal quickly once they escaped the cavern and found some kind of shelter to make their new home above.

“So,” Lancer started from where she was lying on her stomach plating beside him, boredly waiting for Vector Sigma to finish its countdown. Shockwave was talking with Elita One a little further off, both of them helping Wheelie cool down from a brief tantrum. “Why the name Haywire?”

Blurr arched a brow ridge. He was lying on his back beside her, Haywire perched on his chassis. “Well because he's so energetic and he's always moving and bouncing and kicking around and not to mention his spark is so-so-so fast—”

Lancer squinted at Haywire, who had done nothing but sleep and blink around groggily since his emergence.

Blurr lightly kicked her shin and scowled. “He was just created Lancer-Lancer he’s probably-definitely exhausted from that just give it a cycle or two and you’ll see what I mean-!”

Lancer faked a wince before grinning easily. “I’ll take your word for it, Blurr.”

Time after that seemed to pass so excruciatingly slowly that when Vector Sigma spoke for a final time, it was ignored at first.

Blurr perked up and stared at the orb, the crest on his helm tingling at the proximity to the ancient computer.

Vector Sigma spun, once, and repeated: “Regenesis process: complete. Planet surface: suitable for mechanical life.”

It then dimmed and quieted, its facets settling into a slow, rhythmic shifting.

Blurr’s spark pounded in his chassis. He wanted to run for the door that opened at one end of the cavern once the force field melted away, but he waited until Alpha Trion finished petitioning Vector Sigma to rebuild Greenlight’s leg and repair some of the bot’s more serious injuries. Many injuries, like Chromia’s cracked plating and Blurr’s aching frame, were declined for repair.

Shockwave physically supported him when they finally moved as a group to the door. Everything was silver; the walls, the wires, and the floor beneath his shuffling pedes all gleamed like new-forged protoform. The room they entered was silver too, with windows that showed nothing but smooth metal walls. They were confused until the door slid shut behind them and the room jolted. It was an *elevator*, and Blurr pressed himself against the glass, holding Haywire up to see as layers of Cybertron’s frame passed them by.

Gone were the rotting and crumbling cities Blurr had stumbled his way through, along with the layers and layers of grime and decay. Their elevator rose rapidly to the surface, no longer so far away from the core now that the planet had been reshaped. Cybertron seemed to glow from within, emanating pink from healthy energon pipes and the vibrant blue light of Primus’ spark as it shone through gaps in the planet’s plating. Blurr pressed his servo to the glass—it did not feel real.

Shockwave’s end of their bond hummed in agreement and wonder.

Their elevator entered a dark tunnel before slowing to a stop at the top.

Alpha Trion placed a shaking servo onto the closed door. “We enter not only a new planet, but a new era.” He intoned, his old blue optics shining on all of them through the dark. Many bots murmured in agreement.

Blurr shivered, clasping Haywire to his chassis, and Shockwave set his gun arm behind his waist, steadying him. The door cracked open, and blue light blinded his optics. He heard

Nacelle and several femmes gasp and he blinked to reset his sensors and see what they saw.

It was-it was-it was nearly alien. Blurr had never seen anything like it in his *entire* functioning. His home was unrecognizable.

A dark blanket of space pocketed with the faint glow of distant stars stretched over their helms, and below lied a planet surface blooming with pale light. The sun was gone and in its absence their planet radiated light from every reformed building and natural gap in planetary plating. Tall spires and natural mountains stood whole and new, and energon sprung from the ground to form rivers and lakes.

Directly ahead, the Well of Allsparks sat alive with activity, newsparks trickling from its opening in search of raw protometal to bind to.

Only now could Blurr see how diseased their world had been, how broken it had become—and how healthy it was now.

Blurr turned uncertainly to look at Haywire, then Wheelie in Shockwave's servo, and then to Shockwave. His conjunx tilted his helm in the direction of the open door, where the other bots were leaving.

“Shall we?” Shockwave asked, offering his gun arm.

Blurr stared at the arm, his too-big spark beating an anxious rhythm, before he smiled. “Of-course-absolutely-let's-go-!”

He intertwined his free arm with Shockwave's, and together they stepped out into the silver dawn that awaited them.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much to everyone who has left comments and kudos on this story, you've motivated me so much. My heart hurts just posting this final chapter, I think that's part of why it took me so long to write it. I never thought anyone would like this when I first started writing almost two years ago. I really appreciate it, and I hope that this was a satisfying ending <3

End Notes

Quartex – 1 month

Deca-cycle – three weeks

Joor- an hour

Kilocycle- 1 year (1 million kilocycles = 1 million years.)

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